

Musha Shugyo



武者修行



MINOR CLANS

A Legend of the Five Rings RPG 3rd Edition Fanzine



Editorial

Welcome to the second issue of *Musha Shugyo*!

What? Did I hear somebody say “Finally!”?

Oh well, I hope you will forgive us for the delays. This issue is twice as thick as the first one (yes, that’s possible even with electronic paper...). With 106 pages, I’m convinced we have set the bar at the highest level it will ever be, as future issues should go back to the 60-ish pages range. But the Minor Clans required—demanded even—that we give them that much space. You will surely note that some Minor Clans received less coverage than the others. Mostly they are the clans that were later absorbed by Great Clans, and thus recieved plenty of material already in canon books (the Centipede and Wasp in particular). Sole exception, the Fox Clan, due to its very recent integration in the Mantis, received a treatment similar to the other Minor Clans. The Customs of the Minor Clans series of articles occupy almost a quarter of this issue and should provide new insight on these often overlooked clans.

A source of great pride is the presence of the esteemed Shawn Carman himself in our humble pages. Discover an exclusive *Masters of War* official supplement, the Army of the Alliance, p. 36. Thanks Shawn! We hope to have you back with more goodies in *Musha Shugyo* #3!

We also get to publish the winners of our first contest. Be sure to check them out p. 57. If you missed your chance in the previous issue, do not worry, there is another contest in this one as well. More on this in the Post-scriptum section, at the end of the fanzine.

It seems appropriate that in this issue dedicated to the Minor Clans of the Empire we introduce Hanami Mura, jewel of the Hare Clan’s holdings. This city is very dear to my heart, and I hope you will visit it in your games and enjoy its deceptively relaxing atmosphere.

Finally, along with the Hanami Mura section, with have another new section: the Gambling House. This section explores the L5R Collectible Card Game and its ties with the RPG, as the boundary between the two has always been a porous one. For the Gambling House’s first appearance, I created new personality frames for Hare Clan characters. Check them out p. 104-105.

I must say that I am very relieved to type this editorial—one of the very last things I do when working on the fanzine—as it means it’s almost ready to be released to the public. We put a lot of work in the document you are now reading. I can only hope it shows at least a little :-)

To better know our readers, we will soon set up an online questionnaire. When you’ll see the announcement on the AEG forums or on www.musha-shugyo.com, please take a few minutes to answer it. It will let us know what you want the most from us and help us shape future issues.

Mikael “Otaku Mike” Brodu,
Editor in Chief

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DEDICATION

I’d like to dedicate this issue to the one person that has taught me to be everything that I am. I will miss you.

Patricia Ingram — May 15, 1936 - May 6, 2008

Our world is a little less bright without her.

Mike Richards (Akodo Harubi)

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A giant THANK YOU to the contributors who produced enough material to fill two issues worth of Musha Shugyo. You guys rock! Major thanks to **Bayushi Kinzo** (Ben Halbert), our webmeister extraordinaire! - Mike Brodu

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Interview with Steve Argyle

For our second issue of *Musha Shugyo*, fan-favorite artist Steve Argyle has accepted the opportunity to answer our questions.

Musha Shugyo: Hello Steve. Thanks a lot for taking the time to do this interview. Could you start by introducing yourself to our readers?

Steve Argyle: I am a wistful goat clumsily ascending the stony path of life. Only my horns are actually a Wacom stylus and a half-drunk can of Mt. Dew.

MS: Where did you study art? Why and how did you choose to go into fantasy art?

SA: Mostly I studied art by crudely doodling on my homework, and attempting to copy Jim Lee's Psylocke and Wolverine onto my notebooks. I took art classes in high school. In college, I was aiming for a "serious career" in medicine. But it turns out you have to be smart and disciplined to do that.

MS: Do you do non-fantasy art? If not, did you in the past?

SA: Professionally, it would seem I am mostly a fantasy artist. That has more to do with who's hiring me than anything else. If you look at my pre-professional work, it's a lot of cyberpunk, power armor, post-apocalypse, and otherwise near-futuristic kind of stuff. There's not a whole lot of time for my own projects now, but I imagine some of those themes would creep back into the art. When I doodle out of boredom or the frequent inability to concentrate, it's usually cartoony parodies of what I'm supposed to be working on.

MS: What tips would you give to starting artists, in particular fantasy artists? Is being a fantasy artist a viable occupation or do you have to maintain a second job?

SA: I can only talk about my own experience, but I'd say if it's something you want to do, the ingredients necessary in your bubbling crock-pot of ambition need to include:

Patience – No matter how good you are, it just takes time to seep into the system. Art directors are willing to take a chance on a new artist now and then, but they also have their stable of workhorses, that have proven themselves, and can be counted on. Getting that first chance may take a while, and transitioning to the trusted stable

takes repeatedly delivering on time, with good work, and with no second-guessing the director. They are your god.

Next ingredient, humility – you can always be better. You need to work toward that with every painting. Being an artist is not a punch-card job. And remember that you are creating for an audience. If they don't like something, or don't get it, it's your fault, and you need to fix it. Launching into defences of artistic rhetoric will get you nowhere. Everyone has eyes, and if something looks wrong, it is.

Almost in contrast to the above, a hearty megalomaniacism – You'll always have detractors. You'll always have people telling you it's not a viable occupation, or that you're not good enough, or that you're losing it, that your style sucks, or you're a sell-out, or whatever. People are critical. Art directors are critical. Their job isn't to tell you how great you're doing, and they won't. They'll tell you what needs to be fixed. You need to have just enough ego to shrug off negativity, but not so much as to think you don't need to keep working at getting better.

Next, a temporary "real job," or savings, or a very understanding rich spouse – it took me a couple years before I could actually abandon a regular job and go freelance full-time. I'm sure there are people who can jump right in, but I couldn't. It was a slow ramping process of getting new clients, and keeping the old.

Lastly, enthusiasm – you'd hope that anyone looking into art as a career was doing it because they love it. It can be a stressful job, but also very rewarding.



MS: Let's talk about your art for L5R. How did you come to work with L5R?

SA: I played the game long before I started illustrating. I was working for Sony on Playstation games, and I grabbed one of our concept artists (Matt Armstrong) for lunch. He had a huge stack of L5R cards on his desk, so I started talking L5R geek. He was confused by both the words I was using, and the strange sequences I was using them in. He explained that he illustrated for them on the side, for fun. So I, being bigger and meaner, forced him to reveal the email address of the L5R art director. I emailed him with some samples, and he gave me a trial illustration to do (Akodo Setai Sensei.) I guess he liked it.

MS: How much artistic freedom do you get when working on L5R?

SA: With the sort-of exception of known characters, quite a bit. You have to stay within canonical parameters, no Crab wielding dual fiery katana while riding a golden dragon or anything. But so long as it all fits the theme and feel of Rokugan, artists get to do pretty well what we like. We get a basic description, about a paragraph, with key info, and we take it from there.

MS: What are your favorite topics/clans to deal with when working on L5R? And the ones that are the most difficult for you?

SA: I have an aversion to drawing horses for some reason. So Unicorn often give me fits. It's hard to pick a favorite, but I do like the additional freedom of the Spider/Shadowlands. It's like they take the clans they came from to a twisted extreme. I've had a great time taking a known character, and tainting them to the dark conclusion of whatever tempted them.

MS: What is the L5R artwork you've made that is the dearest to you, and why? Conversely, is there one you'd rather forget about, and why?

SA: Hmm... That's a hard question. And it changes frequently. There are a handful of paintings that I rushed, or just didn't quite work out, that I'd rather forget about. And most all my work has things in them that I wish I could change. As for favorites, I like the Samurai Edition Satsu, Chuda Ruri in all her incarnations, Kyofu, the Obsidian Champion. I could keep going. There's a lot that I like, and a lot of different reasons I like this or that. One I wish I could do over, is the Kami. At the time, I was having a hard time figuring out how to get them all into the same setting, with all different colors, and not have it look like a Rainbow Brite acid trip. I think I could do a much better job now.

MS: Is there a particular picture you'd love to do for L5R (a specific character, action, etc.)?

SA: Oh, there are tons. It'd be a pretty long list. But for starters, Kachiko, Rekai, Sentai, Hida O-Ushi, Daigotsu, Kitao... Seems like lots of evilers and babes. Yeah.

MS: Do you work with other RPG/fantasy gaming companies? If so, what is the difference between working with them (or working on non-company-commissioned art) compared to working with AEG?

SA: Working with different companies and art directors is as varied as people are. I work with a lot of the big fantasy game companies, and they're all unique.

MS: Do you do non-company-commissioned art? If so, do you treat it differently?

SA: I do, and I do treat it differently. It's a bit of a gamble on my part, because with an art director, their job is to manage a bunch of artists and artwork. They know what they're paying for, how long it should take, and the quality to expect for the price tag. With a private commission, the spectrum ranges from total artistic freedom, and a customer who is thrilled with what you deliver, paying promptly and including a tip, to the guy who nitpicks every square millimeter, wants to see version after version with huge changes, expects you to pull the image straight out of their mind, and ultimately you end up with a frustrated client, a frustrated me, and a begrudging "Sorry, I can't finish this project. Even if we stopped now, I'm at about seventeen cents an hour according to the original bid."

On their part, it can be frustrating because of the amount of time it can take. I'm usually booked three months or so in advance, and juggling several projects. So after everything is agreed on, it's usually a few months before they even see a sketch, and a few more months before they see something finished.

MS: Let's talk technique now. Can you describe how you create a new piece of artwork for L5R, starting from the art description AEG sends you to the final art? How long does it take? What media/softwares you use? Do you use live models/photographs?

SA: After filling my brain with caffeine and a battery of unholy rituals, I start with a few quick gesture drawings to try and get some movement and feeling into the work. I usually do this in an L5R card frame, so that it works in context with the composition of the card. I've found this always makes the final, on card image look better. Then I'll work rough color in underneath the sketch. After that, it's all cleanup and detailing. The final and the rough usually don't look all that different until you zoom in. On my website (www.steveargyle.com), I've got a handful of time-lapse videos of the process. As I continue to rebuild the site, some of the old tutorials and work in progress shots will be added to the images in the galleries.

MS: Is there a technique in particular that you prefer (i.e. paint and canvas, pencils or digital creation, a mix)?

SA: I work straight digital now. Even though I miss the precision and look of real pencil drawings, I like the freedom to make huge compositional changes with just a few mouse clicks. When you tally up the hours, I've been doing digital art a lot longer than even pencil, so it's pretty fast for me now.

MS: Do you feel like your technique has evolved since you started this career? If so, what changed?

SA: There is slightly more quiet weeping under my computer desk now than before. But yes, I've been moving around in style, going more realistic, then back to more painterly, or more stylized. Each time trying to keep some of what I like about a particular style, refining the look of my work.

MS: What are your inspirations and favorite other artists?

SA: Oh. This is many things. I am inspired by sugary goodness and video games. I'm inspired by mythology and ancient history. I'm inspired by good movies and caffeinated beverages. The list of my artistic inspiration is huge. It'd even be huge if you picked by genre. But, to throw out some names: Brom, Ian McCaig, Frazetta, Lockwood, Adam Hughes, Andrew Jones, Linda Berkvist, Drew Struzan, Wayne Barlow, Michael Wheland, and many, many more.

MS: Do you listen to music when working? If so, what's currently on the playlist?

SA: I bounce between music, books/lectures on tape, cartoons/movies in the background, and the degenerate voices in my head. For music, there's a wide variety, from blues to metal to film scores. Books on tape are typically non-fiction, mostly stuff from the Teaching Company. Cartoons are usually a long playlist of Venture Bros. Invader Zim, Futurama, Harvey Birdman, Family Guy, basically all sorts of juvenile humor for adult delinquents.

MS: Tell us about your experience when you attend fantasy conventions or L5R tournaments. Any funny anecdote to share with us? Which of your artwork is most often requested by fans?

SA: I have had a great time at all the conventions I've been to so far. I guess I have a few stories. I got lost alone in Germany at 2am. I ordered mystery food with Rich Wulf – since neither of us spoke French. I failed to recognize many a celebrity at Gen Con when they came to my art table – until people tackled them for autographs, and general cross-continental hooliganism.

The artwork I seem to get the most requests for is probably Chuda Ruri. Since her blood-drinking "enlightentaint" brought her beauty, she's been quite the popular wall adornment. Can't say it bothers me any. :-)

MS: Do you play Legend of the 5 Rings, either the CCG or RPG, and if so, what is your favorite faction/clan?

SA: I do. Although I've been so busy that I actually haven't played since Samurai Edition. I had a few decks



of different clans, like a lot of folk, but I gravitated toward the dark side. I always played Shadowlands, and I'd probably be Spider if I got the time to take it up again.

MS: Aside from L5R, what are your favorite games (cards, board, computer, console, RPG, miniatures, etc.), hobbies, or TV shows?

SA: I've mentioned a few of my favorite shows above. I love Firefly, Strangers with Candy, Arrested Development; I'm getting into 30 Rock. Computer games, I still like the old favorites: Star Control 2, Planescape: Torment, Star Craft, and puzzle

games, so many puzzle games. I've lost days to Desktop Tower Defense.

MS: You recently upgraded your website. What can you tell us about the redesign process, and what else you plan for this website?

SA: The redesign was aimed at making the site more navigable, better looking in general, and ultimately to give more control to the visitors. A lot of this is still in the works, stuff like users being able to list just the images they haven't seen, or be notified of preferred image categories (Like just new additions to "Crab Clan" via email or rss.) And other sorting options. And much of it is starting to be implemented, like the time-lapse videos, detail, sketch, and alternate version images, commentary, wallpapers.

There's one thing coming up that is a mighty experiment just brimming with potential to bring about the apocalypse. It will be commissions directed by the members of the site, whatever they may want. All they have to do is buy a print of it when it's done, if it measures up. Details will be on the website in early June.

MS: Any other announcements to make or things you'd like to say to your fans?

SA: You all are the reason I do this. Honestly, there's a lot more money to be made elsewhere, but the players of L5R are unparalleled. I have such a great time with players, and after an event, I'm all recharged and looking forward to the next batch of artwork. I read many of the fan forums, and the AEG main forum, and I'm always thrilled when I see someone noticed the artwork.

MS: Thanks again for your time with us, Steve.

SA: My pleasure!

Interview conducted in May 2008.

A Review of Masters of War

As a whole, I did enjoy this book for many different reasons, and I will attempt to list them here as I do a quick overview. Keep in mind that I have no military training to speak of, nor do I have any expressed interest in military matters of any kind. Also, please remember that the Lion are near and dear to my heart so any book that has significant information on them will always be found on my bookshelf. That being said, let's proceed to the review.

In the front of the book (Introduction) you are first greeted by an introductory fiction. As fictions go its nice, but nothing to write home about. After the fiction we are given an appetizer of crunch. A few pages of Rokugani History in a timeline format giving particular details of those periods as they would relate to possible military campaigns or adventures. I find this section to be a nice addition. One of the things I have always found lacking in L5R sourcebooks is the lack of information available for different time periods of the Emerald Empire, and this is a positive step in the right direction to remedy that.

Then we get to the meat of the book (Chapter One to Three), where each chapter follows the same general structure. After the fiction we get a brief description of the families of the Crab and their roles within their armies, as well as their histories militarily speaking. I found this information truly interesting and highly useful if I were to ever run a clan specific campaign. The next section discusses the various armies of the clan and their makeup by soldier type. I have to admit that I found this section as dry as it could possibly be. It took a considerable amount of time for me to make it through the armies section as I found none of the information really all that important in my terms. The section that I found the best was the Strategy and Tactics portion. Listed here are all of the major clans that this clan could ever consider being at war with (which is of course, all of them), and the tactics they would choose to use against each one. The next section lists a lot of information particular to the clan's holdings and dojo. There is a ton of background information to be had here, and it is all ripe for the picking. Once the fluffiest portions are through, we follow with the crunchiest. There are listings of each clan's elite unit types along with NPC's that can be had in each of those same elite units, along with a brief back story for each. Then we get on to the rules. Each clan has several schools, paths, and other supplemental information that can be readily used in your home game, and since most of it comes from the School Update Project, you probably already are. The next section is something that I

also highly enjoyed seeing as I've been working on this very thing for this fanzine, Heritage Tables. The Lion also have new optional Mass Battle Tables.

At the end of the supplement (Appendices), there are a few diagrams and descriptions of two of the more impressive battles in the empire's history. Again, I got very little out of this information save a small amount of flavor and an idea of the timing of events should I choose to run one of these battles as an adventure. After the battle descriptions is a reprint of the ancestor rules that again, you've all probably been using for quite some time now.

Now that the bulk of the review is done, I noticed things in individual sections that I'd like to address. In the Crab section, it is well documented that there are many flaws. One of which is obviously the missing Dojo's which will be posted on the Forums at www.l5r.com by the time this review is published, I'm sure; the other glaring issue is the missing Kaiu Wall map and the optional Mass Battle: Shadowlands rules (mentioned in the back cover blurb and in the Table of Contents, respectively). These are two huge omissions, which really taint this book in many ways. If you are like me, you can quickly forget these things and move on, but if not this may be a problem for you.

Akodo Harubi

Editor's note: I thought a second review would help the readers to make their own opinion, but I have little to add to Harubi-san's great review. There is one thing he didn't mention though: this book is about half an inch smaller than the rest of the line on both dimensions, for no apparent reason. This makes the book stand out like a sore thumb on my bookshelf, and for an OCD-ridden person like me, it itches to no end. I am also less forgiving with the layout errors that not only lead to the loss of the dojo (that we reprint in this issue, page 77), but also created some very weird holes in the layout throughout the book.

—Mike Brodu

TECHNICAL DATA

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How to Use the Hare Clan Trilogy

The Hare Clan Trilogy is a series of adventures, dealing with the destruction and reinstitution of the Hare Clan as its main theme. The first chapter of this trilogy, *The Hare Clan*, is found in the *Game Master's Pack* (the one with the black, three-panel screen which shows the 7 Great Clans' mons as well as the same map of Rokugan which was found in the first edition rulebook), and threw the players in the middle of some nefarious plot devised by a Kolat splinter group (though that detail is not supposed to be known by the characters at that time) which involves both the Hare Clan and the Scorpion Clan. The Second chapter, *The Haunting of Usagi Castle*, was found in the *Game Master's Guide* of the Second Edition rule set in which the PCs are asked by the Phoenix to help them investigate the reports of haunting at the ruins of Usagi Castle. The third chapter, *Bells of the Dead*, is found in the module of the same name, and finally exposes the Kolat plot to your players and ends with a final confrontation against the Kolat masterminds (or so they think), and the exoneration of the Hare Clan.

Part I – The Hare Clan

The *Hare Clan* is a nice little adventure to introduce players to the world of Rokugan, as it has a bit of everything; investigation, combat, the Shadowlands, and mass battle. There are no Insight Rank requirements for the players, but since it involves a trek into the Shadowlands, as well as a mass battle, both of which tend to be a bit too lethal for Rank 1 characters, I'd suggest holding it for a party of Rank 2 characters. It uses first edition rules so conversion problems should be few and far between and even then, a quick fix shouldn't be too hard to find (for example, depending on the power level of your players, the two vengeful ghosts summoned by the goblin shaman could either be yorei, goryo, or ikiyeo). The main problem would be the Hare's ancestral sword, Kennō. Although it could be used as-is, increasing Reflexes by 10 for the purpose of initiative might result in a ridiculously and largely useless huge initiative bonus. Reducing this bonus to +3k0 and offering immunity to Combat Reflexes shenanigans would be a good start toward balancing the sword. You may also consider upping the DR of some of the defending goblins, considering that since first edition, the average character will have gained roughly one and a half Wound Ranks.

The *Hare Clan* is divided in three parts, including an enjoyable fiction which serves as the prologue for the adventure. In the first part, the players are approached by Matsu Chokoku, who asks them for help in retriev-

ing a stolen scroll which he believes is now located in Hare lands. On their way there, the players will eventually meet a young Hare bushi who is fighting an ogre. This Hare bushi turns out to be none other than the Hare daimyo's son, Usagi Ozaki. A clue is then found on the ogre which seem to indicate that the lost ancestral sword of the Hare might lie somewhere in the Shadowlands.

Part two takes the party, accompanied by Ozaki, into the Shadowlands and Hiruma Castle. Here the players will have to fight the resident goblin shaman in order to get the Hare's ancestral sword back.

In the third and last chapter, the party heads back to Shiro Usagi only to find themselves besieged by a Scorpion army a few days later. Ironically, it is during that time that they'll be able to do the most investigating to find the scrolls.

Part two and three are supposed to be non-linear and could be interchanged if play demands it, but the most logical progression still seem to be running part two before part three.

Finally there is an annex of sorts, which contains the statistics of the adventure's main antagonists as well as a handout for when your players finally find the scroll. This handout is the infamous "Kolats code", and your players might be tempted to crack it. A quick search on the internet will yield either the contained message or the key to crack the code, so you'll either have to trust your players on this, or change the code/message.

Part II – The Haunting of Usagi Castle

The Haunting of Usagi Castle is also categorized as an introductory scenario to help beginning players get a feel of the setting. It doesn't have as many elements as *The Hare Clan*, since it is mostly a small investigation scenario with a supernatural flavor and a single fight scene. This makes it ideal for Rank 1 characters. This adventure is obviously written for the Second Edition, but since this is a short adventure, the amount of dice rolling is pretty low, and at times even optional (or even unnecessary if your players played through *The Hare Clan* adventure first), which makes this adventure not too hard to adapt to Third Edition.

This adventure is also divided in three parts, although this distinction might not become immediately apparent. In the first part, the players are summoned to Ryoko Owari by an Asako Inquisitor named Asako Moharu. Once they get to the city, they learn that the meeting

will be held later that night, giving them time to wander around the city. This part is used mostly to introduce the party to the customs of Rokugan, and the GM is given a series of pre-generated events to spring on the party while they are visiting the city (note that at this point, the *City of Lies* boxed set might be a valuable, but not mandatory, source of reference). Finally, during the meeting Moharu will question the players about the various virtues of bushido.

Part two is the assignment proper, as well as the party's arrival in the former Hare lands, their meeting with a Hare ronin named Muso, and a young boy named Otu who claimed to have been attacked by ghostly samurai. It is revealed that Otu is Usagi Oda's youngest son and Ozaki's brother. Otu was never mentioned in the first adventure, making this one of the strangest plot developments ever devised.

The third part will be the investigation of the ruins of Shiro Usagi, the meeting with the ghost of the dead daimyo, Usagi Oda, and a fight with a gang of vengeful Scorpion ronin and a would-be Scorpion maho-tsukai.

Finally, there is a "Who's Who" section, containing a new advantage for Asako Inquisitors (which can be used as-is for the third edition) and a sidebar which might become useful should you ever decide to have a player haunted by the ghost of Usagi Oda...

Part III - Bells of the Dead

The third part of this trilogy, and the longest adventure of the three, is *Bells of the Dead*. This is no introductory adventure, and even though there are, again, no Insight Rank suggestion for the party, the School Ranks of the main antagonists as well as the obstacles the players will have to face seem to make it ideal for Rank 3 or 4 characters. This adventure was released for the Second Edition, but oddly enough, a lot of the mechanics are listed in First Edition format. Yet another oddity is the Third Edition early draft version feel, exemplified by Koda's stat block which introduce the use of 4 Raises to gain an extra attack. All in all, this adventure shouldn't be too hard to adapt to Third Edition rules. You may have to rewrite Koda's stats though, since the Kasuga Bushi no longer gives insane bonuses to peasant weapons which might make it harder for him to constantly make those 4 Raises.

The adventure begins with a short introduction which sets the main theme of the adventure, and is quickly followed by a letter written by Ozaki to his sister Tomoe, which could very well be used as a player handout, should they ever find it. There is also the adventure's background, which contains a useful timeline of relevant events. This ties many loose ends (especially from *City of Lies*), as well as some practical advice in case some of the previous adventures didn't go exactly as planned. The adventure is again divided in three parts (called acts this time) and each of them contains a few CFS you can add to the main adventure. Lastly, the book ends with a couple of maps: one for Friendly Traveler Village, which can be handed out to your players, and one of Daidoji Dasan's fortress which is for the GM's eyes only.

In the first act, the players are summoned to Sparrow lands by Miya Katsu who asks them to accompany Miya Sasami on her surveying mission. Of course, this is a ruse and Katsu quickly asks the players if they could spare some time to find the ronin Ozaki. This, in fact, is their real mission. The rest of act one is rather non-linear with nine different locations that your players could investigate in order to find clues. A lot of these locations have connections to some other minor clans such as the Falcon, the Fox, the Hare, and even the Badger. Since this part of the adventure could easily take months of in-game time, feel free to include any short adventure of your own creation in there to spice things up (for example, if the players end up going into Badger territory, they may find themselves there when Hideo no Oni launches its attack on the clan). Act one ends with Ozaki finding the players instead of the other way around. At this point, Koda attacks and your players will have to save Ozaki from the burly Tortoise. Also note that in this act there are a few suggestions on how to run the adventure in a pre-SCC campaign if your players decide to track down Bayushi Tomaru, so it is not a necessity to have had the Coup happening before running *Bells of the Dead*.

The second act begins with a mad dash to the temple of Jurojin in order to save Ozaki from a supernatural disease which he contracted in his scuffle with Koda in act one. The players then head to the nearby Friendly Traveler Village, which has currently fallen on hard times. It ends with a naval confrontation with Kitsune Hamato, the instigator of all the troubles currently plaguing Friendly Traveler Village, and his yojimbo Koda (yes, him again) as well as them finding Hu Xiang's bell on Hamato's ship. Note that Yasuki Taka's "evasiveness" now falls under the Sincerity Emphasis, so make sure Taka (or whomever you replace him with) can mop the floor with the PCs in the Sincerity department since they must not—I repeat—must not suspect Taka of anything. This part of the adventure also contains interesting side bars regarding sake production both in the Empire and in real life, and while not indispensable to the adventure, are interesting pieces of information nonetheless. Lastly, a small editing error seems to have crept in: in two places in act two they make mention of Kolat agents stats, but this particular stat block is sadly missing from the book...

Act three is the final showdown. In it the PCs will track Dasan and his splinter group to his haunted mountainside castle and battle him, Koda (yet again), a few Kolat agents, and finally the true villain of the story, the Shimushigaki. Once all of this is finally over, the Hare are reinstated and two of your player characters may end up getting romantically involved (one with Usagi Tomoe, and one with Miya Sasami). This section seems to be cursed with the largest amount of errors. First, there is the same problem as in act two: Kolat agents are mentioned here and there but they have no stat block. Then there is a similar mistake concerning the oni guarding the twelve fake Bells of the Dead (its stat block can be found on AEG's archived website, and it is reprinted below for your convenience). Also, In Ozaki's stat block, Kennō is still listed with its First Edition initiative bonus (Second Edition used Awareness instead of Reflexes for initiative). Lastly the area #16 is not displayed on the map of Dasan's castle.

ONI NO YOSHO (3RD EDITION)

Air: 4 Earth: 4 Fire: 3 Water: 2

Rolls when Attacking: 7k3**Rolls for Damage:** 5k1 (spikes)**TN to be Hit:** 35**Wounds per Level:** 10**Shadowlands Taint:** 5**Special:** May attack three times per round, but may not attack the same person more than once. Oni Qualities.**Special Vulnerabilities:** If the bell of Hu Xiang is rung, Yoshō screams in pain for two rounds. Its TN to be Hit is a mere 5 during that time.*How do I use all this?*

Well, let's start by identifying what are the main requirements of this campaign.

- The destruction and reinstitution of a minor clan (in this case, the Hare).
- The fact that Hiruma Castle is still lost to the Shadowlands.
- The second rise of Iuchiban (in which the Shimushigaki served in Iuchiban's army).
- The creation of the twelve Bells of the Dead.
- The fact that the Kolat are still unknown (or at the very least, believed destroyed).

The rest is mostly optional; even the Scorpions subsequent destitution is not mandatory as seen in act one of *Bells of the Dead*. So, taking all of this into consideration, we can surmise that this campaign is most easily played from year 830 (the creation of the Bells) to present time Rokugan.

First, let's destroy a minor clan. The easiest way to do this would be to make a homebrewed minor clan specifically for this reason as this would have the benefit of not upsetting the current setting too much. Another possibility is to use the Hare Clan again; simply put those events are only happening now and the Clan was never disbanded during the Clan Wars era. Finally, if you're playing during the Empire's past, you could always adapt the campaign so it can be centered on either the Boar or the Snake. This last option will require much more work, either because of the way those clans were destroyed or because of other important events, such as the second rise of Iuchiban (which may not have yet come to pass, but if you pull it off, imagine the possibilities. For example, after exiting the Shadowlands, your players come back to Chuda lands during the Five Nights of Shame. Not only must they convince the Phoenix that they're not possessed by the Shuten Doji, but they must now help the Phoenix destroy a clan that not so long ago they were helping).

Second, let's try to fix some of the historical inconsistencies. So Hiruma Castle must still be lost to the Shadowlands, how do I pull this off in a pre-Maw or present day Rokugan campaign? Simply make it a Hiruma Castle instead of *the* Hiruma Castle; in fact even if playing the campaign as is, this would make

much more sense since the map provided in *The Hare Clan* makes it seem laughably small for a major family's ancestral castle. This would simply be a small advanced fortified post that either fell early in the Crab's eternal war with the Shadowlands, or that the Crab never bothered to reclaimed due to its unimportance. Also, what if Iuchiban has not yet appeared, or never even existed, in my campaign? Well, gaki are not the only supernatural beings who may wish humanity harm, and gaki also have always existed, long before Iuchiban even came to be, so the solution could be as simple as rewriting the campaign's background, or as complex as picking some other supernatural entity (perhaps the Tsuno are trying yet again to escape Toshigoku). Lastly, you could always bend the setting a little bit. After all no one will complain if some events happen up to a few decades sooner or later than they're supposed to...

Finally, let's deal with the Kolat. Obviously, the Kolat need to remain mysterious in order for this campaign to work, otherwise your players will know immediately that they're not dealing with the real Kolat. Running it right in the middle of Shinjo's purge, when the conspiracy is exposed to the Empire at large, might not be a good idea... Either your players' characters must believe the Kolat nonexistent, or extinct. For this, running this campaign before the Hidden Emperor might be the best solution. During this time, the Kolat are largely unknown and their names are only whispered by a few conspiracy theorists that no one believes anyway, because let's face it: who could out-Scorpion the Scorpion Clan? And if your players are ever faced with the events of *The Opium War* from the *City of Lies* boxed set, they might even think that the Kolat are nothing more than another bunch of petty maho-tsukai... which is exactly what the real Kolat would like the Empire to think; disinformation is a strong weapon... Once the Kolat are exposed during the Hidden Emperor, all of this mysteriousness, all of the misconceptions, all of the disinformation, all of that is shattered like a dropped porcelain plate; the Empire knows exactly what the Kolat are and what they stand for. The second best solution would be to run this campaign after Hidden Emperor, when everyone thinks the Kolat are actually destroyed. This way, the characters will think that they're dealing with the few odd agents who slipped through the crack and who are trying to rebuild their organization and thus, turned to maho out of desperation.

In conclusion, these three adventures are nothing more than the building blocks necessary to build this campaign, and you are the mortar which holds those blocks together. Be creative: if you play your cards right, your players may not even realize that you're running the Hare Clan Trilogy. And don't be afraid to mix and match; a campaign which starts with the destruction of the Snake Clan could end with a bang when the players uncover a Shimizu-Chuda alliance bent on helping the Tsuno reach Ningen-do again...

Kalajel

The Customs of the Minor Clans



Customs of the Badger Clan

Recent years have marked a reversal of fortune for the Badger, the likes of which the Empire has not seen since the restoration of the Scorpion. Thanks to the discovery of the Tomb of Ryoshun, the Tenth Kami, the Miya and several of the great clans have contributed substantially to the restoration of Shiro Ichiro and the rest of the Badger lands. Today, the Badger are in better financial state than ever in their history, and have more political power as well. The Badger are still suffering from a shortage of people, but they have started compensating for their loss by accepting ronin into their numbers. This does not mean that any ronin who wants to may join the clan, but that ronin who formed connections with the bushi of the Badger Clan during their time of wandering (after all, many Badger samurai were part of Toturi's Army, and for years gained their livelihood as ronin do), and who have proved themselves worthy in the eyes of the Badger are welcomed into the recovering clan.

The Badger Clan is the oldest minor clan in existence, now that the Fox have been absorbed by the Mantis, and their customs hail from the Crab Clan, often representing older traditions than those accepted in the great clan today. The main difference between the current ceremonies of the Badger and the rites of the original Crab is the complete elimination of shugenja from the rituals, even the most profoundly religious and spiritually important ones. Historically, the Badger have preferred to have monks take care of their spiritual needs, but as only few outsiders ever reached the far recesses of the mountains which the Badger inhabit, they, more often than not, had to do without them as well. Recently, the Tomb of the Tenth Kami has become the target for pilgrimage for various monks, and they have become more common than they used to be in Badger lands. Furthermore, the terms of the treaty between the Minor Clan Alliance and the Dragon Clan (signed in the last winter court in Kyuden Otomo) ensures that an ise-zumi advisor is always present in Shiro Ichiro.

Over the last few years there have been attempts to incorporate the Tomb of Ryoshun into some of the rituals of the clan, to varying degrees of success, and it is uncertain which of these practices will remain for posterity.

Birth

In every Badger settlement there is at least one designated woman, who has given birth at least once, who serves as a midwife. This status grants her authority in several fields as will be described here. Generally a samurai-ko would serve as midwife for samurai, and a heimin woman would serve as midwife for the lower castes, but in rare cases, when there isn't a suitable woman to be found, it has been known for the midwife and the mother-to-be to be of different castes. That midwife is responsible for all the aspects of the birth, both the physical aspects, as well as the spiritual ones. Once a Badger woman discovers she is pregnant, she presents herself to her midwife, and from that moment on, she is considered to be under the authority of that woman. The midwife dictates the diet, level of activity, and just about anything else in the pregnant woman's life (down to, and including, her intimate relationship with her husband). The midwife visits the house of the pregnant woman on several occasions, to inspect and prepare it, and may even remake the arrangement of the house if she finds it physically or spiritually lacking.

When the expecting woman feels that she will deliver shortly, the midwife is summoned to the house. Once the midwife arrives, no man is admitted inside, and the midwife commands the women of the household in the processes of labor. Meanwhile, the husband, accompanied by all other male members of his household, stand outside the doors of the house, fully armed, so as to protect the lady of the house from any threats. For high ranking samurai, the husband is usually also joined in his watch by other samurai not currently on duty.

Once the child is born the midwife leads the women of the house in a ritual in which the floor is swept with willow branches, which is supposed to drive away evil spirits. Only after the entire house is swept in this way are the men allowed in.

In recent years a new practice has become increasingly popular, in which the father takes the child shortly after its birth to the entrance of the Tomb of Ryoshun, and pray to the Kami to protect the soul of the child.

Gempukku

Strength is the most important value to the Badger, and nowhere is this clearer than in their gempukku ceremony. The Badger gempukku ceremony is composed of a series of contests involving feats of strength and endurance. First, the candidates are told to collect large boulders.

ders from the surrounding mountains and carry them to the testing place. The candidates are warned not to bite off more than they can chew, and bring boulders that reflect what they can reasonably cope with. This caution has a reason, which would soon be revealed to the candidates: once they have retrieved the rocks, they are tested in how long they can hold the boulder in their hands without dropping it. This way the candidates are tested not only for their strength but for their knowing of their own strength. Interestingly enough, if the candidate confesses before this test that he does not believe he can carry the boulder he fetched for long, he would get higher marks than if he fails to carry the boulder for a significant period of time.

The testing is ended the following day, when all the candidates for gempukku compete in a set of sumai matches. The winner of this small tournament is declared the "Champion of the Young", and will usually enjoy a prestigious appointment after the ceremony is complete.

Traditionally, those who passed their gempukku were presented before the clan champion, and swore an ancient oath to defend the Empire's northern borders and their clan. Ichiro Kihongo, the current champion, has changed the location in which the oath is taken and has entered some changes into the text of the oath. The oath is now taken in front of the Tomb of Ryoshun, and the candidates swear to protect the tomb and its purity in addition to Empire and clan.

Courtship

Not many outside the Badger are aware of the deep fondness (and not inconsiderable talent) the minor clan has for music. Gifts of music (be it an original composition, or a superb performance of a known piece) are considered the most traditionally prestigious courting gifts, and young samurai spend many an hour honing their musical talents and technical skills.

Rarely does a Badger samurai reach the age of 23 unmarried. A samurai who reaches the age of 22 and is not yet married or engaged is summarily referred to his settlement midwife so that she can find him (or her) a suitable mate. The midwife then checks her lists for a mate, and if she does not find one locally, she will correspond with midwives of other settlements until an appropriate mate is found.

The wedding ceremony itself is simple and unsentimental, and is usually performed by the highest ranking military officer in the settlement.

Superstition

The Badger believe that Hideo-no-Oni, the demon which slew three quarters of their number and destroyed their ancestral home, comes from the north, and therefore believe that looking too long in that direction may attract its attention, and that sleeping facing north is the most unlucky thing one may do. This is somewhat of an odd superstition in a clan the declared purpose of which has been for centuries protecting the Empire from the north.

The Badger believe that luxury softens and corrupts the body and the spirit. Many among the Badger believe that spending large amounts of money on clothes and other

niceties is considered to attract the attention of jealous spirits, especially gaki. That is not to say that the Badger would not use such things under any circumstances. In order to avoid loss of face when interacting with one of the "softer" or "less manly" clans (like the Crane, Phoenix, or the Imperials), the Badger will use expensive dishes and wear fine clothes, but this will always be accompanied by discreet gestures and the silent recitation of arcane prayers to ward off evil spirits.

The Badger have a genuine affection for other clans who share their aversion to luxury (like the Crab, Dragon, and Sparrow), even if they do so for different reasons.

The Badger veneration of strength expresses itself in another way as well. The Badger believe that any form of bodily or mental weakness is to be shunned for fear of bad luck. Sick people (as opposed to injured people) are usually secluded from regular society, and those who take care of the sick are considered to be almost pariahs. This includes, for the most part, the female menstrual period, in which women withdraw from general society, and don't even associate much with their own husbands (although they are generally allowed to interact with their underage children). People who discover that they would not recover from their illness feel such deep shame, that they often ask (and are granted permission) to perform seppuku.

People who are mentally ill are treated in an even worse manner, as they are considered to be cursed by Lady Moon, and are generally driven away from Badger lands, or, if they are lucky, turned over to the Brotherhood of Shinsei, so that they would take care of them.

War

The Badger were created to defend the north-western border of the Empire from foreign invasion, and so being always prepared for war is the defining trait of the Badger, perhaps more than any other minor clan. The ever readiness to war has shaped the psyche, body, history, and even the geography of the Badger. Every Badger settlement is built first and foremost by the strategic value of its location, and every Badger settlement is built around, and in support of, a military outpost.

It is an irony, then, that the Badger never actually engaged in war. No one has ever attempted to invade Rokugan through Badger lands. Even when the Unicorn returned to the Empire, they managed to bypass the lands of the Badger, a fact that still stings the Badger, and that the Unicorn are only too happy to remind them of. The only war ever to come to Badger lands was with the appearance of Hideo-no-Oni, but against him the cunningly designed forts and fortifications of the Badger were of no use. The demon rampaged through the lands of the minor clan, killing nearly three quarter of its population.

Oddly enough, this decimation of the Badger, against which all their martial prowess were to no avail, had made the Badger reveal their military techniques in battle to the Empire for the first time. Scattered to the four corners of the Empire by this devastating blow, the samurai of the Badger gained recognition for their military prowess when they joined Toturi's Army during the Clan Wars (an

action that contributed significantly to Badger warriors being identified as ronin for years later, but which also prevented their dissolution during Toturi's reign). Later, they offered their services as mercenaries and bodyguards throughout the Empire, saving their earnings and sending them to Shiro Ichiro to aid those who still lived there, maintaining the Badger claim on their lands, and to their two dojos in exile (one in the City of the Rich Frog, and the second in Tsuruchi lands).

Like their Hida ancestors, the Badger often do not rely on the katana as their primary weapon (although they are certainly well-versed in its use). Instead they prefer the use of jiu-jutsu and wrestling, and when they do fight armed, they prefer to use the largest possible weapons, which makes the nage-yari, the no-dachi and the ono very popular among their ranks. This is not out of disdain for the iconic samurai weapon. Rather it is out of the admiration the Badger have for demonstrations of physical strength.

With the discovery of the Tomb of the Tenth Kami in their lands, the Badger now expend much of their war efforts to the protection of that sacred site.

Retirement

Like many groups on the verge of elimination, and much like their Crab cousins, the Badger are generally loath to retire. To tell the truth, retirement was not extremely popular among the not extremely devout Badger even prior to their disaster, but this trend is certainly stronger today. The elders of the clan take this cue from their Champion Ichiro Kihongo, who is himself long past the retirement age. Instead they prefer to teach their fighting techniques to the new generation and to those ronin who joined the clan in recent years, so that they are preserved for posterity.

Some among the clan have approached the Brotherhood of Shinsei, trying to interest them in establishing a monastery near the Tomb of Ryoshun, or even in establishing an order dedicated to him.

Funerals

Funerals are an austere and somber occasion for the Badger. Not one word is uttered during the entire ceremony by any of those assembled. This does not mean that these ceremonies are completely silent, for it is in their funerals that the Badger musical talent truly comes to its peak. The Badger spare no effort in making their funeral music as beautiful and moving as possible, and music performed in funerals of high ranking Ichiro could rival even the most exquisite of Kakita creations. However, these two types of music are completely different in character. Kakita music is civil, reserved, often almost polite in comparison to the wild, strong, heart-wrenching creations of the Ichiro. Ichiro funeral music is meant to interact with the mountainous nature of Badger lands, taking into consideration the reverberation of sound on its barren peaks, always toying with (but artfully avoiding) the chance of avalanche. It is a music meant to express the pain and sorrow of the clan with the departure of one of its numbers, and beseech the spirits and kami to aid him in his voyage to Meido. It has been said that Badger

music can only be performed in the wild, for at home it loses much of its power and vibrancy. Badger also tend to avoid the use of string instruments so favored by the Kakita, and use wind instruments, especially hichiriki and shinobue, but also the sho, a lot more often, building the melody alternately with strong rhythmic taiko drum beats. After the funeral ceremony, it is customary that the family and friends of the departed go to a sake house and drink all night long, sharing anecdotes and funny stories about the deceased.



Customs of the Bat Clan

Although supposedly the Bat Clan is not the youngest of Minor Clans, having been recognized by Toturi III over two years before the clan of the Oriole, the latter was founded upon the Tsi family, with its traditions having been established and developed over centuries past. The Bat, however, is an entirely new creation, and so it has a difficult mission, much the same as its fellow magic-centered Minor Clan, the Dragonfly: on the one hand it has to rely economically, as well as militarily, on a Great Clan, the Mantis, but to maintain its nascent independence, on the other hand, it needs to create barriers, both cultural and political between itself and its patron and benefactor. This task is made even harder by the fact that the ranks of the Bat hail mainly from the Mantis.

The fledgling clan is trying to use two unique elements in its condition to carve a distinct niche for itself.

First among these is the actual person at the heart of the Bat Clan. The founder of the clan, Komori, is a person of extraordinary heritage, abilities, and ideas. Komori was educated in the Yoritomo Shugenja School, but has always been an unorthodox practitioner of its teachings. His father who was a koumori, or bat spirit, has been, perhaps, the most defining element in the shaping of his character, and from him he gained his signature summoning magic, which he honed to near perfection over the years, and which, in turn, was the reason he was granted Minor Clan status. From his father Komori also learned reverence and compassion for all life, and the importance of protecting those in need. Komori has been attempting to bequeath these values to the Minor Clan that has been forming around him.

The second shaping element of the character of the clan is the actual place in which the Bat resides. Everyday life in the Bat Clan revolves around the only holding the clan

possesses – the Monastery into which Komori pretended to retire when he was tasked with raising the Daughter of Storms, Yoritomo Kumiko. This small piece of land has itself had great impact on the demeanor of the neonate clan. The unusually high amount of monks in its lands, and the fact that its stronghold is in fact a monastery, have led to many monastic practices and ways of thinking to percolate into the Minor Clan.

Birth

There have not yet been many births among the Bat Clan as of yet. This is a result of the fact that most those who answered Komori's call and joined the budding clan, were either too young to have been married, or too old to conceive new children. And even among those who have had the ability to procreate in the last few years (because they have matured enough to be wed, or were of marriageable age to begin with) many prefer to put off bringing new children until the economy of the young clan is stable enough to support a new generation. Komori and other of the clan leadership have not put any pressure on the younger generation to begin procreating yet, as they are aware of the precarious economical situation of the clan, and because the recruitment efforts for the clan are far from over. New samurai, mainly from the Moshi and Yoritomo families of the Mantis, but also Tsuruchi and ronin have joined the clan. Recently even some former Fox members, who don't want to be absorbed into the greater Mantis Clan, and appreciate the connection of the Bat to the spirits of Chikushudo, took use of the Mantis dispensation for its members to join the Bat.

Those few births that had occurred in the recent years have been seen as reasons for celebration for the entire clan. As soon as a shugenja or monk ascertains that both the mother and newborn are healthy (whether it is within hours, days, or even months after the birth), the clan erupts into spontaneous celebrations. There is very little formality in these celebrations, and all ranks of the clan, from the lowest to the highest (and even the monks at the monastery) mingle freely. In fact, some have been using these impromptu parties to bring forth private problems and requests that they do not wish to make public before their senior members, and the latter have been usually more than willing to listen and aid in the solving of these problems. This practice could develop in the future into a tradition of sorts, but that remains to be seen.

After the birth, many of the new mothers, inspired by the ancestry of the Clan Champion, have taken to praying and supplication to various shape changing spirits for protection of their newborn children. Usually the spirits chosen for such supplication are Koumori, because of their caring nature toward all lives and for their familial relation to the Bat Clan, and the Inu, the dog spirits, for their loyalty and steadfastness, and for their affection to children. Many fathers even carve Inu and Koumori figurines to be hung over their children's cribs as protection against malicious spirits, and give older children Inu-shaped toys (Koumori toys are much less common) for the same purpose. Usagi-shaped toys are also common, for these spirits are believed to share (and therefore protect) the innocence and joy of childhood.

Gempukku

If birth is uncommon occurrence (as of yet) in the Bat Clan, gempukku is a rarity indeed. In the few years since the establishment of the clan, no Bat-born child has yet arrived at the age of gempukku, and very few families with children of appropriate age for gempukku have joined the clan.

The customs behind the few gempukku ceremonies that have actually taken place have been beginning to take some tentative shape, but it is almost certain that they have not yet found their final form. A recent such ceremony began with the candidate sent into a secluded grove on the island of the Bat at night, to commune with the Komouri spirits, and entreat one of them to reveal itself to him. Once this had been achieved, the young candidate conversed with the spirit about philosophy, trying to gain insight from it.

Then upon his return the candidate conversed with one of the senior shugenja of the clan, recalling the conversation and what he has gained from it.

A fixed feature in all gempukku ceremonies for shugenja candidates in the clan was a demonstration of ability with magic, particularly the summoning magic developed by Komori, which has become the cornerstone for all magical research and endeavors by the clan.

Courtship

In contrast to birth and gempukku, marriage has been the most prevalent ceremony in the short history of the Bat. The Bat is probably the youngest clan in the Empire – not only in regards to its own age, but also in regards to the average age of its samurai. When such a group of young people live and work with each other, it is almost inevitable that romance should blossom. For the most part the elders of the clan try not to interfere with these affairs, as long as they are not wanton and lead to marriage, but people are expected to be wed by the time they reach the age of 22, or their elders begin to drop ever-thickening hints that the person in question is to set an appointment with a matchmaker. Curiously enough, proven scholastic abilities are considered an attractive quality in a potential spouse.

The ceremonies themselves tend to be a simple affair, where the betrothed couple declares their willingness to be wed in front of the entire clan, whereupon a shugenja prays for the fortunes to give their blessing to the union.

Superstition

With so short an existence, few beliefs can be said to be purely indigenous to the Bat Clan. Most superstitions of the clan seem to represent the superstitions of the clans and families from which their members came. For the most part this means the Mantis Clan – particularly its Moshi and Yoritomo branches. However, these have been mixed with some ronin beliefs and, recently Fox ones.

The only beliefs unique to the Bat Clan are the ones connected to their founder – Komori. Many among the younger guard of the Bat venerate their champion almost as if he were a Fortune, and regard him almost as the

Empire at large regards the Son of Heavens. Komori himself, as well as other elders in the clan, tries to dissuade such manifestations of faith whenever he encounters them, for fear that the clan would be accused of heresy, but this has had only partial success. The veneration of clan members has been diverted often to the bat spirits from among whom Komori's father hailed. Because of their connection to the spirits of the dead, Koumori are considered to be mediators between mortals and all other spirits, and even the Fortunes – and so almost every ancestral shrine, and even every shrine to the Fortunes, are decorated with statues of Koumori, to whom offerings are made before the beginning of the actual supplications to the ancestors or the Fortunes.

On the same note, when Bat clansmen believe that they have aroused the anger of a Fortune or ancestor, they often supplicate a Koumori spirit to help them appease the offended supernatural being.

War

The Bat is too young, small and remote to have been involved, or even to have considered, war significantly. As shugenja, and especially with the great monastic influence on their clan, the clan tends to be pacifistic (although not to the degree of the Phoenix, Dragonfly, or Asahina). The Bat rely on their isolation from the Rokugani mainland and their friendship with the Mantis to defend them from the envious stare of more powerful clans, and on the Mantis naval magistrates to protect them from pirates. This does not mean that the Bat are oblivious to their own protection. Their monastery island has fortifications along the shores, and the Bat maintains regular patrols around the island and in their small port.

Retirement

A relative large number of the people who followed Komori to his newly founded clan have been on the verge of retirement, or have even moved beyond it. Most of these people have seen their joining in the establishment of a new clan a long term challenge and project. For that reason, the few people who actually did retire in the three years since the founding of the clan, were those who did not find a place for themselves or their ideas in the new clan. There is no generalization that can be said in regard to the manner in which these samurai retired, beyond that that it was usually typical to what they were before joining the Bat. Their actual retirement was a simple, ceremony-free affair. They simply informed Komori of their intentions, and after a conversation in which he tried to ascertain their motivation for retirement (and, sometimes, persuade them to stay), their retirement was announced to the clan at large. Nothing official was done beyond that and the retirees were free to make their farewells as they saw fit.

Funerals

Not many funerals have been performed in the young clan of the Bat as of yet. However, when a clan contains as many people beyond retirement age as the Bat does, death is an inevitability. Funerary rites are very traditional, reflecting the rites of the Moshi. The only addition the Bat have made to this ceremony is an entreaty to the Koumori

to safeguard the deceased spirit on its way to Meido. The viewing of the spirit during, or in the immediate day following the funeral, is regarded as a good portent and a sign that the soul of the deceased is in good hands.



Customs of the Boar Clan

The Boar Clan existed for only a short time, as only six daimyo ruled it, and was renowned as a clan of master armorsmiths and metal workers. It was born out of the Crab Clan out of sheer endurance and an incredible will to survive against the odds. But it is that same stubbornness that initiated its fall. The Boar Clan's fate remains a mystery to this day. Most believe the entire clan was sacrificed to the Anvil of Despair by Agasha Ryuden and Asahina Yajinden. In truth, its entire existence is intimately tied to the Shakoki Dogu, an enigmatic spirit entity that lives in the Twilight Mountains. In an attempt to protect the clan from the Bloodspeakers, it took nearly all its members out of phase with reality, turning them into disembodied spirits in the process. It is unknown whether the Boar will ever be released from the Shakoki Dogu's care, or if it is even possible for them to return to their lands.

Birth

Like any small Minor Clan, the Heichi celebrate the birth of each new child, be they peasant or samurai. When the babies are only a few days old, samurai parents will give the child a tiny hammer, the kind used to shape ore and raw materials. Children who grip the hammer closely are said to be blessed by the Fortunes to become a great craftsman.

The local monks also gift each child with a small statue with large, misshaped eyes and limbs that are said to embody the spirit of the mountain. Parents often place these statues near where the child sleeps so it might protect the young samurai. While it is not known to most samurai or peasants, these statues truly are the embodiment of the great Shakoki Dogu, the beneficent spirit that resides within the Twilight Mountains; the Shakoki Dogu creates these effigies, and often uses them to speak to chosen humans through dreams (for more on Shakoki Dogu effigies, see *Secrets of the Crab*, p. 26-29). Grown Heichi samurai often still carry the statues they were given as children, especially when traveling outside of the Twilight Mountains.

Gempukku

While the Yaban-no Buta dojo only taught a relatively small number of students in its limited operation, the Boar sensei nevertheless established a fairly unique test for their prospective students, a series of three tests highlighting the Boar Clan's areas of focus.

The first step of a young Heichi samurai's gempukku begins several months ahead of time, as each student is responsible for crafting his own Mai Chong. While the pronged blades are different from most other weapons, it is simple enough for these students to craft. Most students take great pains to craft specific (and unnecessarily ornate) modifications to their Mai Chong.

After the sensei and Clan Daimyo inspect each submitted weapon, the gathered students perform their weapons and martial techniques. To test the students' craftsmanship, each prospective samurai uses a weapon forged by another student. A student who cannot complete his bugei test has not only shown his own failure, but that of the student who created the weapon he had used.

The martial test is followed by an extensive session where the prospective Boar samurai are quizzed on their knowledge of mining and engineering. The senior sensei brings out a number of plain unmarked boxes containing different rocks and minerals, and each student must accurately identify each sample. Students who answer correctly are required to answer questions regarding the optimal solution to a number of common and uncommon problems and situations that might face a mine supervisor. One visiting samurai noted that these Boar students were forced to recite the various methods of extracting ore in a way that mirrored the Akodo War College's recitation of battlefield tactics.

Courtship

While his parents and masters arrange marriages for young Boar samurai, each prospective groom is required to present a significant dowry in the form of an exquisite suit of crafted armor. While this armor is theoretically supposed to be made specifically for the samurai's future wife's father, many young samurai who are not yet betrothed begin creating their potential dowry immediately after completing their gempukku. After all, if these young men are not of adequate status to warrant an arranged marriage, their offered craftsmanship must be extraordinarily superior.

When the wedding ceremony actually occurs, the bride's father attends fully clad in the armor his daughter's husband has crafted.

Superstition

Boar samurai and peasants alike have one particularly curious behavior – whenever stepping out of a building (whether it is their own residence or their lord's castle), they pause briefly and grab a handful of dirt and dust, which is then rubbed briefly between their hands. This odd ritual comes from the early miners and settlers in the Twilight Mountains, who rubbed rock dust on their hands to better grip their stone cutting tools.

While they have rarely encountered any sort of actual danger so far away from the Shadowlands, the Heichi are still very much aware of the danger facing their Crab brethren. Boar miners refuse to dig in the direct direction of the Shadowlands, instead zigzagging any tunnels that might face southward.

The Heichi are rather fond of keeping songbirds as pets, and the Twilight Mountains are still brightened by the calls of birds left behind when the clan disappeared. Boar mining camps are particularly fond of these birds, as the deepest tunnels often have birdcages stationed along their lengths. The Heichi believe that the sounds of the birds will scare away any evil spirits hiding in the tunnels, and if any of these birds are found dead, it is a cause for great concern.

War

The Heichi family rarely engage in open warfare; other than defending their storehouses from foolish bandits blinded by the thought of the Boar's wealth, most samurai never see combat. Those rare Boar who actively seek adventure often request postings guarding the caravans that are sent out of the Twilight Mountains, carrying ore to the Kaiu forges.

Prior to the creation of the Carpenter Wall, however, the Boar lords would periodically assign divisions of their samurai south to fight alongside the Crab. Unlike the usual tightly-packed formations of spearmen, these Heichi samurai fought best in loose squads, each one whirling about with his Mai Chong.

Retirement

While the Boar's remote location removed them from most threats of conventional warfare, the hazardous environments within the mines take the lives of many strong Heichi samurai. The few lucky Boar samurai who are lucky enough to reach the age of retirement usually join the large Temple of Yama-no-Kami, the Fortune of Stone, located alongside Shiro Heichi. As many of these retired samurai possess invaluable knowledge of mining or armorsmithing, it is not uncommon to see any number of these monks advising their former kinsmen or working next to them in the forge.

Funerals

The frequent cave-ins in the Heichi mines made it difficult to recover many of the bodies of dead Boar samurai and peasants. Before the Battle of Stolen Graves, the Boar buried their dead in crypts located in older, unused mines. Each family line had its own distinct tunnel or offshoot, with many of the ruling families located in a single empty mine; the Heichi gave this honored site the nickname "Koten's Daughter," after the Crab's famed ancestral hall. When the Emperor's law demanded the cremation of corpses, these crypts were used as memorials, and families often placed treasured armor and weapons inside, along with the deceased's ashes.



Customs of the Dragonfly Clan

The Dragonfly has never been a large clan, even compared to other Minor Clans. However, their numbers have been severely reduced after the year of 1158, when the Lion armies ran amok in the lands of the Dragonfly, butchering any man, woman or child in sight, moving forward to engage their supposed real adversaries, the Dragon Clan, only once they were certain that they had annihilated the Minor Clan beyond any chance of rehabilitation.

Unbeknownst to the Lion leadership, their brutal attack upon the Dragonfly did not come to the Minor Clan as a surprise. Thanks to the prophecies of Tonbo Euiko, the daimyo of the Dragonfly managed to covertly evacuate more than half the samurai population of the clan, many of them not even knowing why they were being sent away.

Only after the fighting between the Dragon, Phoenix, and Lion abated, did the evacuees begin to return to the devastated Kyuden Tonbo. At first they returned in a trickle, but later, after Toturi Sezar restored the Fortress of the Dragonfly and settled within its wall, the numbers grew. In time, the Dragonfly restored their main Temple and Dojo – Still Water Temple – and Sezar entrusted Kyuden Tonbo to their rightful custody.

Birth

Even though a decade has passed since the Massacre of Kyuden Tonbo, the lands of the Dragonfly are still desperate for manpower – both samurai and heimin (who suffered even greater losses than their lords, as they generally were not sent away). This situation has caused much deliberation among the Dragonfly leadership, who decided in the end to adopt some of the tactics employed by the Mantis Clan upon their ascension to Great Clan status, namely, to encourage clan members (be they samurai or not) to procreate as much as possible, promising elevation in status to any samurai who bore at least four children, and giving one-time grants in koku to heimin upon each birth beyond the third.

The celebration of childbirth among the Dragonfly has always been a somberly joyous occasion, for the contemplative and deeply religious Minor Clan sees almost any step in the cycle of life as cause for reflection, observation, and introspection. Among the samurai of the clan, birth rituals are lengthy, complex, and impressive. On the first evening of every new month, usually at

evening twilight (having both the Sun and Moon visible is considered a particularly good omen), all those born in the last month are taken to an open shrine of the founding ancestors of the clan, Mirumoto Asijin and Isawa Maroko, where every Dragonfly samurai not currently duty-bound elsewhere are in attendance. The parents of the children present their newborn to the ancestors and the Clan Champion (or the Champion's spouse, if the Champion cannot be present), and name his or her childhood name. Then, the sensei of Still Water Temple leads the entire assembled clan in prayers, first to Benten, then to Lady Moon and Lord Sun, followed by prayers to all the other Fortunes, then to the Elemental Dragons and kami, and lastly to Shiba and Togashi, the first for the Dragonfly's remembered descent from the Phoenix, and the latter, for their descent from the Dragon as well as for his oath to protect the Dragonfly. Then, the Shugenja of the Senkensha vassal family, under the supervision of their daimyo, perform two divinations for each of the babies, one is documented and is available for all members of the clan to read later, and the second is shared only with the parents. The ceremony ends with entreaties for the ancestors to protect and guide the child. Throughout the proceedings (and especially during time when the divinations are performed) the ceremony is accompanied by performances by groups of shugenja of an elaborate aerial dance, where the shugenja touch ground and leap into the air, utilizing their school technique (which relies on the use of water and air kami), and carrying lit lanterns, treated with various colored minerals, representing all the elements (void, of course is the space between the dancers). This sight is said to be breathtaking. High ranking members of the clan have the right to require that such a ceremony be performed to their children individually (in which case the divination may be actually performed by the Shenkensha daimyo), but since the restoration of Kyuden Tonbo, Tonbo Dayu, the Clan Champion, has let it be known that he does not approve of this custom, as the shared ritual expresses in a clear way the shared destiny and fraternity among the Dragonfly.

The Dragonfly consider this ceremony to be most sacred and it is a rare non-Dragonfly indeed who can honestly claim to have witnessed this spectacle. It is one of the greatest honors the Dragonfly can bestow upon those from outside the clan.

The peasantry of the clan follows a simplified version of this ceremony, overseen by a shugenja who also performs the divination for the child.

Childhood

The official inducement of the clan to bring as many children to the world has caused a different sort of trouble for the Dragonfly, as although the crops in the years following the greatest catastrophe in the clan's history have been bountiful, the shortage of working hands was exacerbated by the influx of non-working (but food- and time-consuming) babes. The Dragonfly simply could not spare the manpower, as they once could, and as is customary in the Empire, for the individual education of children prior to their gempukku. For that reason the samurai of the clan asked the assistance of the contin-

gent of Brotherhood monks which resides in Still Water Temple. The latter organized the children into classes based on age and talents and they are taught collectively. This practice, commonplace among the peasantry, and even ronin, is almost unheard of within the samurai caste, and has lead to some disparaging remarks, mainly from the Lion. The Dragonfly generally ignore this, but when pressed they remark that it is thanks to the Lion that the practice had to be employed to begin with. Early on, there was some resentment among the higher ranked families of the clan over this practice. They saw it as a belittling of their own station, having to send their children to be educated in this way. Tonbo Dayu, the Clan Champion, silenced such murmurs by making a point (and a show) of sending his own young daughter to these classes.

Gempukku

The gempukku ceremony of the Dragonfly is as heavily embroiled in religion and magic as their birth ceremony is. It consists of three trials that must all be passed in immediate succession. Each step must be completed before the next is begun, which is determined by the sensei of Still Water Temple, who oversees the ceremony.



First, the candidate must keep his calm, and enter a state of meditation in the face of constant distraction (or even downright harassment) by several other samurai. Once the sensei determines that the candidate has successfully achieved a state of meditation, the second stage begins. In this stage the student must express his control in the rudiments of Dragonfly philosophy and debate how magic, especially divination magic, and change are interwoven into the Tao and lead to Enlightenment. The candidate is naturally not expected to show original and independent philosophical structures, nor prove that he is on the brink of achieving Enlightenment. He is, however, expected to demonstrate familiarity with the basic concepts, terms, and modes of thinking associated with the philosophy of his clan. The final trial checks the candidate's social skills and ability to stay calm in hostile social situations. The sensei orders him to address one of the present samurai and notify him that a request he has made has been refused. The candidate is tested for his ability to express this in the most disarming way possible, and by his ability to stay calm in the face of the rage that this refusal evokes, regardless of how mildly it has been expressed.

Courtship

Among the Dragonfly, marriage occurs relatively late, especially for women. The Tonbo defend this tradition by pointing out that women who experience their first pregnancy in their twenties face a lower risk of miscarriage and death. As is customary throughout the Empire, most marriages are pre-arranged by the clan. Unlike most clans, these arrangements are almost universally made by shugenja of great reputation in the use of divination and divinatory magic. These shugenja inspect any omen, sign, or clue surrounding the potential betrothed's birth and life, as well as those of his or her parents. Any aspect of the match is inspected to make sure the marriage is as enduring and fruitful as possible, and that its contribution to the clan is long-lasting.

Despite all of the above, few clans are as lenient in matters of broken engagements as the Dragonfly are. The Dragonfly believe that Benten herself had a hand in the creation of their clan, and that it was because of her intervention that Isawa Maroko met and fell in love with Mirumoto Asijin and so broke her engagements to Akodo Yokutsu. If Benten chose to thus show her hand in the fate of the most illustrious of the clan's ancestors, who, then, are the clan's shugenja to insist on arranged marriage when love points elsewhere?

Superstition

The Dragonfly share many of their superstitions with their cousins among the Phoenix and the Dragon, especially with relatively many of them having been trained among the Shiba, Mirumoto, and Kitsuki. This is especially true in regards to the respect the Dragonfly express to all spirits and ghosts, especially to those natural spirits of the forests. Like the Phoenix, the Dragonfly have a deep fascination with children born with white hair, and consider it a portent of great destiny.

The Dragonfly put great store in the art of divination, and have accumulated certain peculiarities unique

to their readings – not surprising the dragonfly insect is an important feature in Tonbo divination. The clan also places great value in their colors, the angle reflection of the sunlight in its wings, its manner of flight and appearance, the number of dragonflies appearing and the interactions thereof, and of course their actions and behavior.

Felines also feature heavily in Dragonfly divinations, perhaps because of the traditional enmity of the Lion. Not surprising felines are usually considered ill omens.

Of particular importance are divinations featuring both felines and dragonflies. A feline catching or toying with a dragonfly is the sign for the worst destiny possible in Dragonfly divination, while a dragonfly successfully escaping a feline is considered one of the luckiest.

War

Perhaps no other group in the Empire is as unwarlike as the Dragonfly. Even the pacifistic Phoenix are willing to employ violence to enforce peace, and other Minor Clans have been known to wage war on one another. For five hundred years, the Dragonfly have relied on their alliances for protection, and what few efforts they did invest in that direction went mainly in the way of defense, the patrolling of their borders, and making sure that no bandits used their disinclination to the arts of war to settle in their small province. Thus most Dragonfly bushi placed an emphasis on archery more than most clans.

Even so, the clan is not unaware that there are enemies to the clan, who may prey upon its members when away from home, and so its shugenja school is one of the few to teach its students the rudiments of spear use, going so far as to even issue a yari to each.

That is not to say that the Dragonfly avoid war at all costs. Many of them followed their former Champion, Tonbo Toryu to the battle of Oblivion's Gate, and some have excelled under his command.

The Dragon-Phoenix war changed the Dragonfly views on war to some degree. Tonbo Dayu, who became Clan Champion upon the death of his father in the Massacre of Kyuden Tonbo, joined the Dragon side in that war and led groups of Dragonfly archers against the Phoenix, dealing the latter some heavy losses.

This conflict taught the Dragonfly that they cannot rely solely on their alliances as a means of survival, and while their pacifistic temperament has not changed, they now see security in a much more serious light than before.

Retirement

The Tonbo are by and large a traditional shugenja family, and traditionally saw retirement simply as a continuation of their efforts while still full members of the clan – the striving towards Enlightenment that has ever been a driving force for the Dragonfly.

However, following the Massacre of Kyuden Tonbo things have changed for the clan. While in the past it was extremely unusual for a Dragonfly not to retire in his early forties, now the need for manpower means that few are willing to retire at all, and some have even emerged from retirement eager to rejoin the clan and help in its reconstruction. Even those few who do retire these

days, almost invariably join the contingent of monks that resides in Still Water Temple.

Funerals

Dragonfly funerals tend to be a simple matter. Prayers are offered to the Elements and to Emma-o, and the shugenja leading the ceremony lists the contributions made to the clan by the deceased. Unusually, foremost among these accomplishments is the listing of their philosophical or academic accomplishments. The traditional body burning site of the Dragonfly is located near a fountain on the top of a hill, a little northeast of Kyuden Tonbo. The Tonbo believe that the presence of all five elements at the time of the funeral eases the passing of the soul to Meido.



Customs of the Fox Clan

As oldest of the Minor Clans, the Fox has long established traditions anchored in their unique relation with the spirits of the Kitsune Mori and their atypical lifestyle in this forest. Their recent integration in the Mantis Clan will undoubtedly bring changes to the Kitsune customs, just as the Wasp and Centipede changed theirs when they adapted to their new status within the Mantis, but for the moment the proud Fox will continue to uphold their traditions as long as they can.

To most Rokugani, forests are dark and dangerous places, full of hungry predators or poisonous snakes, untamed wilderness tolerated solely for the timber and game they provide; it is best to avoid them for one's own safety. To the Fox however, they are home. This choice was the most influential on the clan's customs and beliefs, as their symbiotic lifestyle in the woods brings them closer to Nature than any other samurai, who see the wilds as unshaped chaos where order and civilization must be brought in the form of settlements, roads, canals, and rice fields.

Birth

When a woman realizes her condition, if she can, she will go and spend a night alone in one of the caves where a kitsune shrine is located, hoping to gain the blessing of the kitsune spirits for her child.

Each future mother manages her pregnancy as she sees fit, requesting help from friends or relatives only when truly needed. Indeed, all Kitsune have an exten-

sive knowledge of the fields and forest's herbs, fruits, and roots, which they use efficiently. Thanks to their potent remedies and practiced self-medication, Fox women are much less dependent on others, and it is rare that a pregnancy goes wrong in Fox lands. Similarly, most births are also less likely to encounter difficulties, and only a few Kitsune are needed to help the mother deliver.

Once the baby is born, parents and friends take a few moments to rejoice in private, but soon return to their various duties and let the mother and child rest. As soon as she is able, the mother will take the newborn to a Fox shugenja who will bless the child and determine the strength of his bond to Chikushudo with divination rituals. Then, she will take the baby to the forest and present it to his "cousins", the fox spirits. The fox spirits do not always show themselves, but they always come. It is considered a very good omen if exactly one female fox and two kits reveal themselves, as it harkens back to the origins of the clan.

Gempukku

A Fox gempukku consists of two sets of trials. The first set differs for shugenja and bushi. Shugenja must display their mastery of magic (in particular illusion spells), their affinity with the spirits of the forests, and their ability to find passages to Chikushudo, the realm of Animals. Bushi go through tests of their martial abilities (in particular the skills required to be a good yojimbo), agility and stealth. The second set is common to all the future samurai, and includes tests of knowledge of nature, its plants and creatures, forest tracking and hunting, but also knowledge of the clan's history and customs, as well as the Empire's history. Most Fox are shugenja, but even those who cannot speak to the kami are expected to make a display of their connection with the kitsune spirits. To do so, all participants are sent in the forest, from which they must bring something that would be a proof of their communion with the spirits. The kitsune spirits rarely reveal themselves, but always keep an eye on the youngsters, oftentimes guiding their steps toward a place with great affinity with the realm of Chikushudo. What the young samurai brings back is kept secret and revealed only to his sensei and the other gempukku judges, and varies wildly from one person to another: one will bring back an oddly shaped smooth stone, the tune of a rare bird's song he heard, or a twisted branch shaped like a jumping deer, a luckier second will recite a tale or an augury that a kitsune spirit told him or a third one less lucky will come back with scratches and bruises, telling how he fell for a fox spirit's practical joke. In rare instances, a truly blessed shugenja will come back accompanied by a trustful kitsune spirit. The judges rarely pass their judgment based on whatever is brought back, but rather on the lesson the young samurai has learned from the experience and how he handles it.

Courtship

Twice a year, at the spring and autumnal equinoxes, it is customary for all the unmarried women of the clan to gather in one of the largest clearings in the Kitsune Mori. All of the assembled women wear green, and often weave flowers in their hair. In these gatherings, almost all

differences of status and role in the clan are put aside, as if nothing differentiates them from one another. In these gatherings, the maidens honor the spirits of the forest – not only the kitsune spirits – but the kami of the trees, the streams and fountains, and the earth itself. The ceremonies, which involve dancing and singing, are believed to arouse the goodwill of these spirits and assure the fertility of the land.

While men are not allowed in the clearing for the duration of these assemblies, it is an open secret that the unmarried men of the clan are hiding in the forest around the clearing, watching the women dancing and singing. Many have commented that the fertility prayed for in these ceremonies is in truth that which originates from the union of a man and a woman, and that the celebrations are simply a way for the maidens to attract the attention of young men. And in fact, more engagements are settled in the weeks following each equinox, than in all of the rest of the year combined.

Weddings are a deliberately simple affair, normally held in open spaces, under the sky – so as to invite the blessing of the Sun. Everyone is invited to attend these weddings, and it is customary not to enquire of the relations of any of the guests to the bride or the bridegroom. This is done in the hope that a kitsune spirit might find the prospect of the party irresistible and will join with no fear of being discovered. It is considered a great blessing when a kitsune spirit attends such an event – especially if they do not reveal their true identity to anyone but the young couple (and even then, it would happen only at the very end of the celebrations).

Superstitions

Unsurprisingly, most negative biases the other clans could have about woodlands have no echo in Fox lands. In an amusing mirror image of the rest of the Empire, the Fox associate many ills and bad omens with civilization. The cities of Rokugan represent the crowded, noxious, dirty and duplicitous places that Fox samurai will avoid as much as they can. Only duty will force a Fox to go in a city, and he will limit his time there to the strict minimum.

The Fox remember the shameful times at the beginning of their history, when they were forced to move to the forest and had to feed on rabbits, boars and deers to survive. They have long ago abandoned this practice, but the stigma remains (eating fowl does not carry the same stigma). No Kitsune samurai would kill a mammal to eat. Should an accident happen that would result in the death of such an animal, the killer would postpone all but the most urgent duties to offer a prayer of apologies and burn incense sticks for the spirit of the dead creature. The taboo is extremely strong for foxes, to which no harm must be done under any circumstances. Hurting or killing a fox, even by mistake, will result in serious punishments or even banishment from the clan.

Whenever forced to leave his homelands, a Fox will bring with him a small sculpture of a kitsune (made of white wood or white stone) blessed by a Fox shugenja. It is a miniature version of the myobu found in the Fox shrines. He will often wear it in a small locket hung

around his neck, so that he always has it with him when he is praying.

Finally, the taboo that some samurai choose to follow, out of respect to their fox spirit “cousins”, can range from the relatively easy to handle (treat the heimin well, do not eat rice, etc.) to the very difficult to keep (never say the plain truth, cannot break a promise, etc.). These taboos are a defining element of the life of the samurai who chose to follow one.

War

As one of the oldest Minor Clan, wedged between the lands of the Crab, Scorpion and Crane, the Fox have had their share of wars. Their first war was the one with the Lion and it pushed them to move to the forest now called Kitsune Mori. More recently, the Fox warred with the Hare (it is during this war that the famous “Night of a Hundred Deaths” took place) and later participated to the Clans War as a member of Yoritomo’s Alliance.

In war, Kitsune excel at harassing their enemy with guerrilla tactics, losing them in the woods and leading them into traps. They use the enemy’s weakness against them to great effect (which means that when fighting against a Great Clan, the Fox usually exploit its overconfidence). In Yoritomo’s Alliance, they provided very skilled scouts and woodlands specialists, as well as supporting shugenja able to heal troops, facilitate movement in forested areas, but also cast against their enemy the illusion spells that are the kitsune’s favored form of magic.

Retirement

The Fox clan as a whole has a profound respect for scholars. They maintain extensive records of the Empire’s history that are on par with the Seppun or Ikoma archives. So, when a samurai retires, he often returns to the Fox lands, where he will help to maintain and protect the Kitsune records. This makes for a very smooth transition as the new monk continues to serve his clan, albeit in a different way than the way of the samurai. That is why retirement ceremonies are rare and informal, as a samurai will often celebrate a life of duty with his friends and relatives at home, take off his armor and daisho like every evening before going to sleep, but the next morning he will simply don the robes of a monk and go to the libraries, never looking back to his old life, nor feeling the need for a formal procedure to mark what he considers a natural step in his life.

Funerals

For a clan whose members sometimes live as old as 250 years, funerals are often a much more emotional event than seen elsewhere in the Empire, though the Fox feel no shame about this. Death is a reminder that, despite their fox spirit ancestry, they remain mortal. Although a Kitsune samurai accepts death just as well as any other samurai, he knows that the hard time will be for his loved-ones who will have to cope with the loss, which is something their kitsune spirit blood renders more difficult to contain.

After a cremation ceremony held in a forest clearing, during which it is not rare to see close friends and family weep, the ashes are kept in an urn for a month in a nearby kitsune shrine. This gives time to anyone who could not join the cremation to come and pay their respects to the departed. Surviving family members often come back to the shrine to pray as well, mourning the loss of one member of the pack. When the time comes, the ashes are taken to the woods, where they are scattered in a ritual that symbolizes the return of one inhabitant of the forest to his last home.



Customs of the Hare Clan

Until recently, the customs of the Hare Clan have not been widely known, due to the clan’s paranoia—they have not wished to give their enemies any glimpse into their way of life. With the foundation of the Minor Clans Alliance, the Hare have begun granting some access to their rituals, as a way of showing trust in the Alliance. With many of the courts of Rokugan now acknowledging the Hare as a major representative of the Minor Clans, the small, insular clan has found itself and its ways under more and more scrutiny, as the Empire seeks to better understand the new actor on its stage.

Most of the rituals and customs of the Hare Clan center on what they call the Hunt. The Hare seek to be self-sufficient, and so hunting has become a part of its daily life in order to feed the members of the clan. The skill became even more necessary during the two years between its dissolution and restoration in the first half of the 12th century, as those Hare that survived were without allies in an Empire that thought them the worst kind of criminals—they had to provide for themselves, as no one would assist them. Since then, the Hunt has become more about revenge against the clan’s enemies, and the Hare have sworn to leave no stone unturned nor give any Kolat agent or maho tsukai rest or relief.

Birth

Like in all small clans, a new life is always very valued. So valuable, indeed, that the Hare believe evil spirits or their minions would be tempted to steal it. To protect the baby, it is customary for the pregnant woman to hide her condition to everyone (save her husband and a trusted midwife), as long as possible. She will wear ample clothes to hide her growing belly, pretend she

gained some weight, and conduct her duties as if nothing special was going on. When the pregnancy becomes impossible to conceal anymore, another tactic is used: the mother will lie about the advancement of the pregnancy, usually telling to anyone inquiring about it that the baby is a month younger than it is. This does not fool any Hare, but is expected to confuse the eavesdropping spirits. Finally, when the time for delivery comes, only the most trusted family members and the selected midwife are alerted and summoned to the house. The mother is expected to give birth as silently as possible, and no one is allowed to speak about the newborn out of the house, so that the outside world can not know that the baby is already born. To maintain the charade, the baby is kept home for as long as possible, and the mother traditionally comes out of the house wearing a bundle of straw under her clothes, so that the onlookers believe she is still pregnant. Most women wait until their child is strong enough before removing the bundle (which is usually a couple weeks minimum, up to maximum two months for particularly weak babies), at which point she will carry the baby out for the first time, and will scream, as if enduring the birthing pains, to both inform the village of the newborn's arrival and scare the evil spirits away. Only then the official ceremony for the child's birth can be held. They are short events conducted by a shugenja or a monk, in which the trusted midwife is symbolically rewarded for her help and her silence, and are usually followed by lively celebrations where all the village, whether samurai or commoners, is invited.

Gempukku

A Hare gempukku is a very simple and straightforward affair. The real challenge for the soon-to-be-adult is to find its location. A small committee decides upon a time and location roughly a week before the ceremony, and will gather then and there to await the aspiring Hare samurai. During the week, the committee members will leave several clues, some true and some misleading, meant to inform the young Hare that the ceremony is upon them. At dawn on the day of the ceremony, the young Hare is awakened by a servant and informed that the committee members are gone. A perceptive young Hare will have picked up the clues, determined the true from the misleading, and will make his way easily to the appointed location. Most Hare, however, will need to resort to their tracking skills to follow the traces of the committee members. The young Hare's performance is determined by the length of time the committee has to wait before the aspiring samurai arrives. Hare who arrive quickly are considered truly blessed and will be given prestigious placements on the front lines of the Hunt. If the young Hare does not arrive by sunset on the day of the ceremony, he is considered to have failed, and is all but cast out of the clan -- one who cannot find the ceremony will be completely unable to assist in the Hunt.

Upon arriving at the ceremonial location, the young Hare is subjected to tests of martial skill, both kenjutsu and jiu-jutsu. During these tests, a shugenja in attendance will cast a spell, which the young Hare will be asked to identify once the martial tests are concluded. Finally, each of the attendees will hold up a scroll containing a

symbol, one of which is associated with a Kolat sect. The young Hare must identify the Kolat symbol by slashing it with his wakizashi. If the young Hare passes all of these tests, he is invited to kneel before the senior member of the committee, who asks if the young Hare is prepared to take on the responsibility of the clan's Hunt. If the young Hare answers affirmatively, the senior member invokes the spirits of the Hare's ancestors to watch over the new huntsman, then presents the young Hare with his katana. With the committee, the new Hare samurai returns to his dojo, where he is presented to the students, his family, and the young samurai's new lord (traditionally the Hare daimyo, although more often the provincial governor).

Courtship

In a clan as paranoid and secretive as the Hare, even the joyous occasions of engagements and marriage are conducted under a veil of secrecy and misdirection, so as to deceive and thwart any envious or malicious spirit. The engagement negotiations are always held in the utmost secret, sharing its existence and progression only with the family and clan daimyo. In fact, for intra-clan marriages, it is not unheard of that even the discussed couple would remain unaware of the negotiations' progression, existence, and sometimes (though rarely) even his or her intended spouse. Even after the negotiations are completed, no public announcement is made until very close to the time of the wedding, and often enough, only until after it has already occurred. However, inquisitive as they are, many young Hare are able to identify very early the telltale signs of a marriage in preparation. Often, once they know the identity of their future spouse, they will investigate him or her to uncover some of their secrets. Originally intended to prevent threats from entering the clan via marriage, this custom quickly evolved into something more playful, and the young married couple often takes great amusement at discussing each other's innocuous secrets during the wedding night, such as childhood funny habits, favorite poet, or secret hobby.

The wedding ceremony itself is also performed in secrecy, with only the betrothed, their parents, and a shugenja or monk in attendance. Its location and time are not revealed to anyone outside of these persons. At some point in the two weeks following the wedding, the families will announce that it has taken place, and only once that announcement has been made will the couple move in together, to begin their shared life.

Superstitions

The color red has an ambiguous status to the Hare. As the color of blood, it is the color of the enemy. No Hare believe it to be a coincidence that the clan was almost destroyed by the Scorpion (which one of their clan colors is red). Thus, when fate forces this color upon a Hare, it is considered an ill omen. Such instances include sunrise and sunset, which are considered unlucky transitory times, or when being offered a red item. But red is also, with white, one of the clan's colors. The Hare explain this paradox saying it is a constant reminder of their enemies and their duty. So, in an act of defiance, a Hare will often choose to wear some red items to prove his courage, and show his grim determination.

The Hare consider their namesake animal to be a lucky creature and will never hunt or deliberately hurt one. Children are fond of their dwarf rabbit pet, usually offered by their parents to protect them, and adults often wear hare-shaped netsuke for good luck. A very old legend popular among the Hare, one that predates the fall of the Kami, tells that rabbits live on the Moon, and as such, the full Moon is an auspicious time to the Hare (a sentiment reinforced by the fact the full Moon's light greatly helps trackers at night).

The Hare know that darkness is the refuge of many dangerous evil creatures. So, before exiting a building and go out at night, a Hare will always whisper a short prayer to the kami, asking for their protection.

War

As a Minor Clan, the Hare rarely need to go to full-scale war outside those conflicts that involve the entire Empire (the most recent being the hunt for the followers of the resurrected Iuchiban). Still, they are nothing if not prepared for the eventuality. Like all warriors, Hare samurai ask for the blessings of Bishamon, the Fortune of strength, but the Hare also seek the attentions of Fukurokujin, the Fortune of wisdom and knowledge, whom the Hare associate with intelligence gathering and scouting. Recently, the Hare have also begun calling upon the Fortune of persistence, Kisada, as many Hare see the quality he embodies as vital to their quest to rid the Empire of hidden threats. Kisada's occasional alliances with the Lost, however, and his recent return to Ningen-do, leave many Hare wondering exactly what role he should play in their preparations for war.

The chief Hare officer in the field will always keep one of the clan's few shugenja on hand as an advisor, depending on the priest to seek the approval of the kami before the clan's forces make any move. The shugenja is often trained in divination, specifically the reading of omens, which the Hare believe the kami and their ancestors use to guide them in both battle and the Hunt.

Retirement

For the Hare, retirement is even rarer than it is in other clans, as the constant battles against the agents of the Kolat and the few remaining Bloodspeaker cells claim most Hare samurai long before they can begin to consider life after the Hunt. Therefore, retirement is considered both a solemn occasion, as it represents the loss of a warrior in the field, but also an occasion for celebration of a samurai who has, in his long years, doubtlessly won many victories over the clan's enemies. The final celebration begins with invocations of Jurojin (who has obviously been looking after the retiring Hare) and the retiree's ancestors, asking for their blessings. What follows is one of the only times the Hare are obviously festive, as they let the sake flow while the retiree tells stories of his exploits. At the end of the night, the Hare's lord (by tradition the family's daimyo, although most often the provincial governor fills this role) approaches the retiree, who then formally asks

for release from his duties and the never-ending Hunt. As permission to retire has already been given before the celebration begins, this is a formal, public ritual, and the Hare's lord responds by praising the retiree's years of service and giving his approval. At this time, the retiree's oldest child, or another chosen heir, will approach, and the retiring Hare will give over to his heir his katana and wakizashi. The heir kneels before the retiree, who asks his heir to follow in his footsteps and continue the battle against the Kolat, the Bloodspeakers, and all others who would threaten the Empire. Following this ritual, the Hare depart, and the retiree spends a final night in his home before leaving the next morning for his chosen monastery.

Funerals

Funerals are unfortunately all too common among the Hare, as the battle against the threats from the shadows claims many. Hare funerals are usually not widely advertised affairs; attended only by the family, close friends, and local officials. Indeed, the time and location of Hare funerals is not announced, as the Hare fear that the same evil spirits that would try to claim a newborn's soul will attempt to corrupt the soul of the fallen. For the most part, the Hare follow standard funeral procedures, with the most obvious unique ritual being the Invocation of the Fallen. The Invocation, which is performed by the eldest Hare in attendance, calls upon every Hare who has died in the line of duty, asking them to protect the recently departed on the way to his next destination on the karmic wheel. When the Invocation is complete, the celebrant adds the name of the late samurai to the scroll from which the Invocation was read. The late samurai's heir is given the scroll and the deceased's daisho, and is asked to continue the Hunt for the honor of the fallen.





Customs of the Monkey Clan

The young and vibrant Monkey Clan has gained considerable prestige and fame during the reign of the Toturi Emperors. The close ties and friendship between the clan founder, the peasant-born Toku, and the founder of that Imperial Dynasty (which were mirrored in the relationship between their daughters, Tsudao and Miyako) have served to elevate the status and prestige of the Minor Clan in the eyes of many in the Empire almost to the rank of an Imperial Family. This estimation was only bolstered by Toku being the first person in history not of Seppun lineage serving as Captain of the Imperial Guard.

Despite all this, Toku was ever a modest man, aware of his humble origins and how his ascension in status seemed almost obscene to many in the Empire, and so discouraged any sign of ostentation and self indulgence among his followers.

The close alliance and intricate web of family ties woven in a remarkably short time between the Monkey and the Scorpion is one of the most curious things about the Monkey. As even though many of the clan were actually born Scorpion, or have a Scorpion-born parent, no two clans in the Empire are more different than one another. And yet the Scorpion, who have never had a comfortable relationship with any of the Minor Clans, remain steadfastly loyal to its small neighbor.

The lands of the Monkey belonged to the Scorpion in the past, and so great was the change in the treatment afforded the peasants by the two clans, that the heimin have enthusiastically embraced their new masters, and have therefore eagerly emulated the customs and deeds of their masters.

Birth

The Monkey was created only about a generation ago, formed around the followers and friends of Toku from his days in Toturi's Army. In that time, it has enjoyed (thanks to the ardent encouragement of its Champions, Toku and Inao) one of the most remarkable baby booms in the Empire, which explains how it has become one of the largest Minor Clans. This was achieved not only by promising elevation in status to those who had more than four children (or grants in koku and tax breaks to heimin), but also by an intense propaganda campaign encouraging men and women to do their duty for the clan and bolster its ranks by having as many children as possible.

When a woman discovers she is pregnant she must inform her superiors of her condition, and over the next months her tasks and assignments in the service of her lord will become increasingly lighter, until the last few months of her pregnancy, in which she will receive no strenuous tasks, except when the need is dire. Similarly, barring any unusual circumstances, her husband will be given tasks and assignments which will not take him far from home during her pregnancy, so that he can support her and care for her during that period. Once a child is born, and a shugenja has made sure of his and his mother's health, the family, neighbors, and friends are invited to visit with the parents and see their newborn.

When the baby is a month old he is taken to a temple dedicated to Toku. There, in front of the monks, the parents swear to raise their child in the light of the principles of Bushido, and in loyalty to the Monkey Clan.

Gempukku

The gempukku ceremony held by the Monkey Clan consists of two tests – an oral test, and a demonstration of skill. The first test is identical to all candidates, while the second differs between the Toku and the Fuzake families.

For the oral test, the candidate must give an oration about the principles of Bushido. Some predetermined elements must be included in the speech, including the connection and relations between the Seven Virtues, which among them the candidate deems the most important, how bushido should become the focus of a samurai's life, and how other important values, such as loyalty to your clan and Empire, obedience to your lord, and the Tao references to the Seven Virtues, but the candidate is expected to demonstrate understanding beyond simple regurgitation of knowledge by adding some elements of his own. The oration is not judged by its form and structure, as the purpose of this test is not to sift good orators from bad ones, but on the merit of its contents, the points the speech raises, how heartfelt and sincere it is, and how well thought out are the points raised by the speech. One more thing the judges expect is for the speech to show some originality – simple rehashing of old maxims and clichés are proof that the candidate did not invest enough thought in his words.

For the Toku family, the second trial is a test of kenjutsu. The two candidates are given bokken and are dressed in padded armor, and they are expected to show their skill with a sword. The objective of this test is not necessarily to overcome your opponent, but rather to show your valor and daring in combat as well as your training with the sword.

The Fuzake family is named after a man known for his use of his medical skills and magic to alleviate the pains of the Clan War. And so, for the Fuzake, the second trial involves a demonstration of the medical skills. The candidate is shown a person with simulated injuries, and he should then treat them (or at least verbally describe how he would treat those injuries if they were real).

Candidates who pass the tests are led to the same temple of Toku where they were taken by their parents in

their infancy, and there they repeat the oaths their parent swore for them when they were born.

Courtship

Marriage among the higher tiers of the Monkey is usually prearranged long beforehand, and it is not rare for the intended spouse to be a Scorpion. Members of the lower ranks generally have greater leeway in choosing their life partners, but this freedom is by no means absolute, and the clan does not shy away from interfering with potential choices among its members. It is rare for a Monkey samurai to reach the age of 20 unmarried and usually at that age the chances of finding a good match decrease dramatically. For this reason, parents of young men and women who are nearing that dreaded age become very anxious to find their child a proper match as soon as possible.

The actual wedding ceremony of the Monkey Clan is very traditional and simple. It is followed by a celebration, usually held outdoors if weather permits, which anyone may attend, regardless of social position, clan affiliation (or lack thereof), or even acquaintance with the newlyweds.

Superstition

The most famous Monkey superstition is that by reciting the Seven Virtues of Bushido over and over in one's mind, one wards off all confusion, doubt, and evil spirits.

Individual whose parents died before or during their birth, are considered to be reincarnations of their deceased parent. Such people are believed to embody the spirit of the clan in some manner, for else, why would their soul be born twice into the clan?

On the other hand, newborns who have had the misfortune of losing both their parents in the month before they could partake in their oath ceremony are considered very unlucky. Such children will always be looked at with some suspicion, and will generally have to work twice as hard as other people to prove their worth. Such people usually find it hard to find suitable matches when they come of age, as people generally fear to tie their lot with such unlucky persons.

Many Monkey samurai, especially among the shugenja of the Fuzake family also believe that laughter and a well-timed joke serve to sooth angry spirits and confound

malicious ones. For this reason, the people of the Monkey are encouraged to always maintain good mood and high spirits, and to share their merriness with all those who surround them. This has contributed to make the Monkey even more popular. This latter belief also influences Fuzake medicine, as they firmly believe that good humor can keep illness at bay, and eases it when it strikes.

War

The Monkey Clan possesses a higher number of bushi serving in the Imperial Legions, the Emerald and Jade Legions, and the Imperial Guard than any other Minor Clan. Furthermore, in the days of the Toturi Dynasty, the Monkey were often tasked with solving and policing in disputes within the Empire. Thus, only three years after their clan's creation, Toturi I tasked Toku and his followers to attack the Naga who were besieging the lands of the Dragon Clan.

Although well aware of their status as Minor Clan, the Monkey have the sensibilities of an Imperial Family. And so every Monkey is ever prepared to fight and die for Empire and Emperor, both in order to protect the Empire from outside threats, and to preserve its unity.

However, the Monkey, especially the Fuzake, do not relish loss of life, even for noble causes, and in all their pursuits try to limit bloodshed to the minimum.

Retirement

The Monkey see retirement as the proper step for a samurai who has passed his prime. The clan holds the teachings of Shinsei in high regard, and look forward to retirement as a chance to finally dedicate themselves to the study of the Tao. However, the Monkey retire not only to the Shinseist orders, but also to the order dedicated to their ancestor, and founder – Toku, who was posthumously elevated to the status of Fortune of Virtue.

The Monkey have a deep respect for Monks, and see them as people of great experience, who can (and should) be consulted on matters both spiritual and mundane, and so it is not uncommon for the leadership of the clan to hold monk advisors, especially former Monkey Clan samurai.

Funerals

Funerals are a somber affair in the Monkey Clan, and perhaps the most ritualized of all Monkey ceremonies. The body of the deceased is cremated in a private ceremony, attended only by the immediate family. After that, the ashes are taken in a ceremonial urn by the family to their home, where they will remain for the following ten days, meditating, debating, and contemplating on the teachings of Shinsei and offering prayers to the fortunes. During the evenings of this period of time, people may come to the house of the family and pray with them, or converse with them on the Tao. After ten days have passed, the urn is taken out of the house and interred in the family's personal shrine or crypt alongside the rest of the ancestors.





Customs of the Oriole Clan

Though the youngest of Minor Clans, the traditions of the Oriole date centuries back to the reign of Hantei XXX, who rewarded the first of their line with the Tsi family name. As a ronin family, the Tsi were always an egalitarian group, perhaps more so than any other group in the empire. Among them, status was rarely determined by lineage, but by skill, and they never hesitated to accept worthy ronin to their ranks.

However, their recent elevation has brought them face to face with two conflicting objectives: on the one hand the Oriole needs to gain legitimacy as a Minor Clan, and make a radical statement that they are no longer a band of ronin lucky enough to have gained a family name, and thus they need to strengthen the sense of familial continuity, inheritance, and hierarchy within their numbers. But on the other hand, having just been promoted to Minor Clan, they need to bolster their ranks so that they can stand among the other Minor Clans as equal. How to reconcile the needs of prestige with the needs of strength, and how to align these with their ancient traditions are, along with their need to establish their own holdings, the biggest challenges the new Tsi are facing today.

Birth

It is a tradition among the Oriole for the expecting father to craft a steel item for his unborn child. Thus one can find among the Oriole a plethora of steel-made toys, the likes of which cannot be found anywhere else in the Empire – from exquisitely made rattlers to surprisingly light and durable rocking horses, and toy animals. Even though not all members of the clan are in fact smiths, there is a tacit agreement within the clan, that when a non-smith samurai is expecting a child he would ask one of his smith colleagues to “assist” him in the making of that item. The smith would in fact be making the bulk of the work, while the father-to-be lends in symbolic effort. It is considered a great honor to be asked to “assist” in this task, and a serious insult (not to mention a shocking breach of etiquette) to refuse such request for anything less than pressing duty elsewhere.

Once the item is complete, it is taken to a shrine of Tsi Xing Guo, the fortune of steel and ancestor of the clan, and blessed by a shugenja or a monk. The item is then presented to the expecting mother, and she will place the item in the child’s crib once he or she is born. That way, they believe, the fortune would watch over the baby, so that he may grow up to become a smith himself.

The Tsi are very protective of their newly born. It is considered bad luck to expose the child to anyone outside of his close family (parents, siblings, and grandparents), or that are not medical/mystical authorities. On the child’s first birthday he is taken to the shrine of Tsi Xing Guo, where a steel wakizashi is placed in his hands (under the strict supervision of his parents), and the highest shugenja in attendance will bless the child so that he will always protect his clan and strive to perfection in all that he creates, thus adding to the glory of the Oriole.

Gempukku

Every child of the Oriole Clan is tested throughout his childhood for any talent or inclination to craftsmanship. The highest respect and admiration are reserved, naturally, for sword-smithing, but any spark of creativity deserves respect in the eyes of the Tsi. Children are encouraged to follow their natural inclination in their physical creations (the Tsi do not consider the creative efforts invested in ikebana or poetry to be as truly admirable as those invested in sword-smithing, armor-smithing, engineering, or even gold-smithing, gem cutting, or carpentry). Their gempukku ceremonies involve a presentation of a completed project they have undertaken during their training. In order for the candidate to pass his gempukku, the item he creates must be as near perfect as is imaginably possible.

Obviously, even in the Oriole, not all members show talent in craftsmanship of any kind. The latter are still valued members of the clan, and are trained to become yojimbo, attendants, and even (though rarely) courtiers and shugenja. The gempukku tests and ceremonies for these candidates are much simpler and less elaborate than those of craftsmen, and usually involve a demonstration of skill, much in the same way that craftsmen demonstrate their skills.

Their position in the clan past graduation depends upon their skill and vocation, even more than it relies on heritage. Sword-smiths will become the highest tier of the clan, with the most talented among them eventually becoming Clan Champion. Ideally, he will be married into the family of the former Champion, but even if that is not possible (for lack of prospective spouse of the right age or gender), the best swordsmith is always the Champion of the Oriole. Below the sword-smiths rank the other workers of steel and metals, and below them all other craftsmen. Non-craftsmen usually rank the lowest in the hierarchy of the clan.

Before their elevation to Minor Clan, the daimyo of the family used to recruit ronin youths who showed promise in the craft of sword making, as well as other ronin to serve the other needs of the family. This still goes on, but on a different scale. The Oriole are a lot more selective in choosing potential smith candidates, but when they are admitted to the clan they are treated in the same way that other sword-smiths are treated and share an equal chance of ascending to Clan Championship. As for non-smiths – the Oriole make it clear to those prospective members, that they will never rise beyond the lower tier of the clan, but that their children will have a chance to

ascend in the clan's hierarchy nonetheless, depending on their skills.

Courtship

The fact that status among the Oriole is determined by skill rather than birth does not mean that parents do not try to pass on, or even improve, the station they occupy to their children. Especially since their elevation to Minor Clan, marriages among the Tsi are almost universally arranged. Since craftsmen occupy the higher tiers of Oriole society, this is done to make sure that children have a better chance to preserve their parents' skills (through inheritance), and social position. Despite this, perhaps because of their ronin background, the Oriole do not believe in professional matchmakers. The negotiations of marriage agreements are handled by mothers of the potential betrothed, usually without consulting their children. In cases where the negotiations are at an impasse, the mothers turn to an agreed upon third party, usually one of the clan elders, to bridge the gaps between them.

The Oriole tend to keep their wedding ceremonies simple, and they usually consist of a formal tea ceremony performed by the groom, shared by his bride, and witnessed by their families, and overseen by at least one shugenja or monk.

This does not mean that the Oriole do not know what romance is. They simply believe it should have no bearing on matrimonial life. One of the favorite topics of Oriole potters and painters, are stories of love from afar that will never be fulfilled.

Superstition

The Tsi are very jealous of the quality of their works, and some of their behaviors towards them resemble the way they behave with their children. An Oriole craftsman, no matter what his craft is, will never reveal a work he is working on to anyone but his apprentice before it is complete and perfect. A partially completed piece, even in its final stages, seen by anyone outside of the craftsman's professional "family" is considered unlucky, and so it will be, if possible, recycled (that is it will be smelted back to its component materials and reforged), or it would have its purpose changed, so that it becomes a different item (for example, a marble or wood figurine would be carved into a different, smaller item). Items that cannot be changed this way are either discarded entirely (if their materials are not expensive or rare), or would be sold to the Tortoise, under provisions that they are later sold outside the Empire. The same is true in the case of any item that has had any fault, damage, or blemish done to it during the manufacturing process (although, with the Oriole smiths' skill level, this remains a very rare occurrence). That said, when an item is discarded, it is not simply tossed to the trash. The Oriole regard their creations as family, and therefore they make for these items funeral pyres or, if they are not flammable, give them proper burial.

These practices have served to increase the reputation of the Tsi as unparalleled craftsman, and their craftsmanship as unsurpassed.

War

Although the greatest fame of the Oriole derives from making instruments of war, the Tsi as a group have almost never involved themselves in any kind of war. Not that they have any particular ethical objection to war, but their small numbers and devotion to craftsmanship guarantee that they never actually wage war on anyone. That said, the Tsi have participated in wars waged in the name of Empire or Emperor, and have even lost a substantial amount of their numbers in the battles during and following the fall of Otosan Uchi, and in the recent attack of the Unicorn on Toshi Ranbo. But in general, an Oriole rarely takes part in warfare during his life.

Retirement

The Oriole see retirement as a reward for a life well lived, and often retire to the temples dedicated to Tsi Xing Guo, the Fortune of Steel. They see the chance to serve the name of their most famous ancestor as a natural continuation of their former lives as samurai, often maintaining their devotion to their craft along and as part of their pursuit for wisdom. The daimyo of the Tsi has always had a few of these monks held as advisers and spiritual guides, and it is actually considered more prestigious to have one of these monks overseeing a wedding ceremony than it is to have a shugenja do so.

Funerals

Like many other aspects of Oriole life, death and funeral rites are an extremely private affair. The ritual of the cremation is normally attended only by the family of the deceased, and his closest friends, rarely more than a dozen or so people. In addition to those, a shugenja or monk is also present, and offers prayers to Emma-O and the other fortunes.

It is customary that when an Oriole dies, regardless of his duties in life, several masterwork items, crafted by an Oriole craftsman especially for the funeral, and made of flammable materials (usually paper and wood), are placed in his funeral pyre, as offerings for the spirits accompanying his soul to Meido, and for the fortunes that reside there. It is believed that this will engender good will towards the person's soul, as well as towards his clansmen. These items are often replicas of the katana, waki-zashi, fans, or other cherished items of the departed.





Customs of the Ox Clan

The Ox Clan was founded near the end of the War of Spirits, to reward the ronin Morito and his followers for their outstanding efforts during the war. Morito is a former Unicorn, cast out after a serious incident that led to the death of a precious Unicorn steed. But he bears a much darker secret, as he is Master Steel, one of the leaders of the Kolat conspiracy. Only a select few within the clan are aware of their daimyo's allegiance and true objectives, and all of them are utterly loyal to Morito and the Kolat (those who objected are dead...). However, the philosophy of the Steel Sect subtly permeates the whole clan, in ways that are invisible to those unaware of the Kolat, but that take their full meaning to those in the know.

Birth

Morito bore a deep resentment for the matriarchy of his former family, and Ox mothers are encouraged to produce male children. If the three first children of a woman are girls, her husband is assigned a concubine to provide a male heir. Many prospective parents will specifically make offerings to beseech their ancestors for a male child. When the child is finally born, the family ties a blessed straw rope intertwined with pine branches to the gateway of their home. These small bundles are said to scare away evil spirits.

Each newborn Ox child is paired with a senior samurai, who acts as that child's "clan-parent." This samurai is partially responsible for the child's well-being and safety, as well as his instruction and mentorship. This mentor is often considered by the child as an equal to his or her parents. Morito initially implemented this custom as a means of deepening the bonds of loyalty among the members of his clan, and it has succeeded.

Gempukku

Each year, samurai and peasants throughout the Ox Clan gather to watch The Race, the massive gempukku ceremony for all prospective Morito samurai. Students race on horseback along a course that is determined by the sensei of the Shiro Morito Dojo. To ensure that students are challenged, the sensei not only make minor changes every year to the location of the course, but some of them have been known to plant hidden obstacles along the way. Completion of the course is sufficient for successful gempukku, as Morito sensei will only allow

the students selected beforehand (who have already been evaluated privately by the sensei) to compete. Each new Morito samurai is given a distinct tattoo of an ox's head on their right arm, where it will guide their sword for the rest of their life.

After the public gempukku ceremony is completed, there is a secret second ceremony held only a few days later. Hand-picked newly sworn samurai who are deemed trustworthy are brought to the Hidden Temple and taught the true nature of the Ox Clan and the secrets of the Steel Sect. After all is revealed, each young samurai is given the choice to join the Steel Sect. Any who choose not to join are taken away and never seen again, but the prospective Kolat members are carefully chosen, and loyalty to the Ox Clan is so deeply ingrained that only a rare few have ever refused. These new Kolat are given a second tattoo that modifies the first – a small grey ring within the ox's nostrils or ear – that is known only to Sect members. The design of this specific mark evolves constantly, to avoid mass extermination of the Steel Sect should a magistrate identify the tattoo for what it truly is, but all Ox Kolat are trained to recognize each other.

Courtship

Morito always taught his followers to determine their own fates, and marriages in the Ox Clan are often chosen by the samurai involved, rather than by a traditional matchmaker. Because of their geographic isolation (and sometimes their secret allegiances), the majority of Morito samurai marry within the clan. Proposed marriages with samurai of other Great and Minor Clans are accepted, but must be approved by the Lords of the Ox Clan (in effect, to ensure the secrecy of the Steel Sect). Prospective spouses of high-ranking Ox are judged either by their potential loyalty to and interest in the principles of the Kolat, or their lack of ability to see through their consort's lies. Though it is not widely known, a few Ox samurai even marry prominent Yobanjin warlords in an effort to maintain diplomatic ties with the gaijin. Such gaijin brides are assigned traditional Rokugani names and skilled handmaidens to ensure that outsiders do not notice their foreign habits.

Superstition

Nearly every Ox daimyo carries at least one piece of awakened crystal as protection against the Darkness, and many even carry a second or third piece. These baubles are often subtly sharpened, and can be made into a makeshift weapon if needed, and the highest-ranking Morito often carry a crystal knife or arrowhead. Even though the Lying Darkness has not threatened the Empire in some time, this fact has only strengthened this practice among the Morito, as they believe their foe is merely regrouping before its next strike. Many Ox samurai follow the example of their masters, even though they do not always understand the reason; while ji-samurai cannot afford true crystal, they strive to at least find a shard of mundane glass and wear it as a netsuke. Peasants who cannot afford glass (as any who have glass will find it in high demand from their samurai lords) value any sort of shiny or somewhat clear mundane crystal or stone.

When he was known as Otaku Morito, the Ox Champion was expelled from the Unicorn for injuring one of the prized Otaku steeds. Morito never forgot his anger when he realized that the Unicorn valued their animals over human samurai. Disgusted with what he saw as the unnaturally close bonds between the Battle Maidens and their mounts, Morito swore to always view his horse as a tool – nothing more. Whenever an Ox samurai requires a mount, he is randomly assigned one from the stables. This practice has evolved into a unique Morito superstition that it is unlucky to ride the same horse for more than 1 month. Ox samurai on extended duty away from their homelands often travel in pairs, so they can exchange horses every 30 days. If a Morito finds himself alone, he will often refuse to ride his horse, walking alongside the animal for at least a month before riding again.

Samurai of the Ox also tend to refer to one another by their given name, rather than their full family surname, even when they have just been introduced to each other. While most other samurai across the Empire might perceive this as an insult to the Morito name, for the Ox it is paradoxically a way of expressing greater respect. Their Lord Morito demonstrated that strong men determine their own fate, that they are not bound by their families. A true follower of Morito chooses freely to serve the clan with absolute loyalty.

War

The strength and ferocity of the Ox Heavy Cavalry is at once feared and respected throughout the Empire, as they possess the greatest military power of any Minor Clan; a fact acknowledged by Morito's position as the Rikugunshokan of the Minor Clans Alliance's army. Using tactics that combine the fearsome charges of the Utaku Battle Maidens and the hit-and-run raids of Yobanjin barbarians, Morito samurai crash down on their foes like a mountain landslide, and then move on before the stunned opponent can muster a response.

While the Ox bushi prefer to fight from horseback, they are willing to engage an opponent on foot. Those who have faced the Ox cavalry tell stories of samurai recklessly leaping off the backs of their horses and cutting down an opponent before their feet touched the earth.

Most Ox samurai prefer heavy weapons, and many even use large Yobanjin style ring swords that they wield with uncanny speed.

Retirement

Like many samurai, Ox bushi who reach the age of retirement often shave their heads and enter a new life as a monk. The Morito (in this mirroring the Kolat's disdain for the Fortunes and the Celestial Order) rarely enter Fortunist orders; instead, most retiring Ox enter either the Thousand Temples or the Shrine of the Seven Thunders, and a number become Wayfinding monks. However, the bonds of loyalty forged as an Ox often extend into their new lives as inkyo, and many former Morito maintain correspondence. All information from the few Kolat monks is passed on to the information networks of the Silk Sect. For a number Ox samurai, the monastic lifestyle is too quiet – these bushi pass their swords down to

their children and are sent north into the Yobanjin lands, where they will explore the gaijin wilderness.

Funerals

Just as a single birth is a matter of celebration for the entire clan, the entire Ox Clan mourns a fallen samurai. Whenever a Morito family samurai dies, messengers are sent to notify all other Ox samurai of the death. While it is unhappy news, it is considered a great honor to be assigned to carry the word of a kinsman's death. In the case of the passing of a Kolat member, the messenger also leaves instructions to local agents to make sure the deceased's affairs were left in order with no unfinished business, in order to protect the organization's secrecy.

The funeral ceremony is subsequently a large public event, and all are invited to mourn the fallen. The Ox Clan always conduct a sumai wrestling tournament as part of the funerary rites, demonstrating that the strength of the Morito continues on after the death of a single warrior.



Customs of the Snake Clan

At its inception, the Snake Clan almost began as an extension of the Phoenix Clan from which its founder came. In the few short years of its existence, the Snake began their own traditions that would have evolved into what could resemble customs should the clan have lasted longer. As the Shuten Doji took control of the clan and exerted its will over the clan members these customs slowly became corrupted into a twisted version of their former selves, just as the tsukai of the clan were twisted versions of normal shugenja. After the Five Nights of Shame the surviving members secretly carried these customs with them to the Asako family of the Phoenix. Now they take these customs to new heights of perversion as members of the Spider Clan.

Birth

Pre-Taint: A child being born into the Snake is an opportunity for the clan to rejoice in a new life. The Chuda see every samurai birth as a new tool in their quest for justice and a possible new future magistrate in service to the Empire. A shugenja is almost always present to bless the birth, and if no shugenja is available a monk will oversee the blessings. It is of course desirable, with their descent from the Phoenix, that Snake children have some connection with the kami but it is not expected. In this way the traditions from their parent clan have carried

over and the children are tested for magical abilities as soon as it is deemed possible. The direct lord of the parents, or his representative, will also attend the event. Once the child is born the parents will pledge the new life in service to the Snake.

Peasant births are just as joyous as samurai births but not nearly as well attended. Most peasant families are fiercely loyal to the clan they serve and tend to mimic their samurai masters in pledging their newborn children's lives in service to their clan.

Post-Taint: Most of the original clan customs on birth survived even through the possessive influence of the Shuten Doji and the slow corruption of maho. The major difference between the two is the reverence which the clan shows to Chuda Reiko the clan founder's wife. She sought the comfort and safety of maho when forced to defend herself and her son from attacking cultists. Being the first of the clan to wrap herself in the ways of maho she is revered as being the founder of the true Snake Clan. Since her time, female births are celebrated even more highly than any other birth in the clan as they wait for her spirit to return to them.

Gempukku

Pre-Taint: The clan was founded by Isawa Chuda, an Imperial Magistrate. In the beginning they were dedicated to teaching and spreading his views on justice and adherence to the Emperor's Law. When the time came for a young samurai to prove his worth to the clan it was a somber affair. It was a time when the frivolities of youth gave way to a life of duty. The gempukku ceremony began with a showing of the skills the young man or woman had learned in his years of training. Kata, spellcasting, a display of kenjutsu, a debate on etiquette, even the reciting of a famous story, anything that is needed to reflect that they have learned what they would have needed to serve their clan in the coming years. These displays were then followed by a lengthy recitation, purely from memory, of sections of the Articles of Heaven as designated by their sensei and family members. When the child had displayed acceptable knowledge he or she became an adult and renewed their parents pledge of service to the Snake.

Post-Taint: Obviously the casting of maho is highly illegal. After all it was the single crime Chuda spent his time trying to eradicate. It can be said that the Snake tossed the ideas of law completely to the side, but that would not be entirely true. They tossed aside only what they no longer believed in but still displayed it otherwise in a way to continue the clan's work as magistrates and learn more about the ways of maho. The biggest change in the gempukku ceremony after the eventual corruption of the clan, was that the newly christened adults actually demonstrated more in the ways of deception and maho than they did in law before pledging their service to the Snake.

Superstitions

Pre-Taint: Just as the Phoenix see themselves as a constant evolution from the ashes as represented by their namesake, so do the Snake see themselves as secretive

agents slithering amongst the empire's criminals. Killing a snake or destroying a snake-shaped artifact of any kind is considered one of the worst things a person can do, and will call down the wrath of any nearby Snake samurai. In that same vein, having a snake in your home is considered a very fine lucky talisman and most prominent members of the Chuda keep one in their home for that very reason. Should a snake ever bite you, it is seen as a test of your honor. Those that survive a snakebite are highly respected by the clan, and those that succumb to the venom are cursed in their death.

Post-Taint: After their brush with maho and eventual empowerment through their connection to a Shuten Doji, the tainted Chuda have largely given up any superstitions they might have once had. Afterall, it was superstition that kept their newfound power at bay for so long. They do however have one fear, and that is of being discovered for what they truly are. Chuda Tamihei commanded each and every member of his clan to maintain extreme secrecy. It is thought that should a single member of the clan mention their true allegiances, the entire clan will come to ruin. It is for this reason that members of the Snake refuse to discuss themselves with anyone outside the clan and it is seen as extreme discourtesy to ask.

Marriage

Pre-Taint: As a small clan, it is not nearly as important for them to marry as quickly as others. The Snake never intended to become a large clan, nor do they feel the need to swell their numbers to defend themselves. Instead the Snake marry when it suits their needs or the needs of the clan. If a young magistrate feels it is time to find a mate, he will bring the concern to his lord. A suitable mate will be found from either within the clan, or if the need arises a political marriage to another clan will be arranged. In this way, the Snake are much looser in their adherence to tradition.

Post-Taint: The maho obsessed Chuda have no real qualms about how, when, why, or where their samurai marry. It is assumed that each member will marry in a way best befitting the clan, and carry on the new traditions as best as they can. It is highly unusual for any member of the Snake to request or be granted permission to marry outside the clan for fear of releasing their secret to the world. Should a political arrangement become necessary extreme caution is taken before the arrangement is made. Their cover as magistrates allows them to come upon Maho-Tsukai in other clans that would be potential new recruits in the Snake. Such individuals are often favored when the matter of marriage outside the clan arises, and the Snake Clan uses its knowledge of the prospect spouse's dark secret to place one of its own into other clans.

War

Pre-Taint: As a shugenja heavy clan, as well as a clan dedicated to the laws of the Empire, the Snake have not had much experience in the ways of war. Most of their fighting styles and tactics come from their Phoenix cousins, and center on their almost fanatical search and destroy missions against the maho tsukai of the empire.

Battle tactics mostly center around secrecy, silence, and a fierce strike.

Post-Taint: Again, secrecy has bound the Snake tightly to their maho use and kept them from spending too much time at war with others. Their work as magistrates continued throughout their existence even under the corruption of the Shuten Doji, the only real difference is that instead of ferreting out maho cults to destroy them, they searched for them to study all the information or artifacts they had in their possession.

Retirement

Pre-Taint: Once a member of the Snake has spent his lifetime in service to the clan and to the Imperial Law, he will spend time teaching what he has learned to the future magistrates of the clan. If she has no more to offer in the ways of teaching, they will petition their lord for leave to retire. If the petition is granted a grand ceremony is planned. The retiring of an aged magistrate is just as much cause for celebration as the birth of a new one. Several of the retiree's friends, colleagues, and family members will attend and a recounting of his cases will be read. When his tale is told, the retiring Snake will present his katana, wakizashi, and his copy of the Articles of Heaven to his chosen heir. The heir will then lead the newly retired magistrate to a temple where she will pray and the heir will attend to her needs for an entire evening. At dawn the next day, the new monk will present himself to those gathered and will then leave on a pilgrimage to his new monastery home.

Post-Taint: Tainted as they were the Chuda did not survive long enough for any of their number to have an opportunity to retire before the Five Nights of Shame claimed their lives. Those that survived in the ranks of the Phoenix adopted the Phoenix's traditions to maintain their cover, but many faked their death or simply disappeared to continue their quest to master maho unhindered. The Chuda serving Daigotsu do not even bother with such ruse: they never retire.

Funerals

Pre-Taint: The loss of anyone has its toll on a clan as small as the Snake. Even the death of a peasant is felt across the clan. When a notable member of a family dies it is not uncommon to see the family home festooned with prayer ribbons. The ribbons are a guide to the newly perished soul to find their way to Yomi, and be honored and revered for generations to come. If a high ranking samurai in the clan passes into the realm of the dead, all clan members are expected to fast for a period of 24 hours. This is the amount of time it is rumored to take for the departed soul to find its resting place. It is believed that food and drink can sometimes tempt a spirit to stay and eventually turn the dead soul into a *gaki*.

Post-Taint: There are many uses for a corpse in various maho rituals and spells so that even in death a Snake samurai can serve his clan. When a Snake dies a few words are said about the deeds he performed or even the power he claimed from maho. Then certain portions of her body, namely the heart and other organs, are burned on a funeral pyre and the ashes given to her family. The

body is then experimented on until it has reached a state of almost complete putrescence. Then and only then is the body buried in case they would need to call upon its service again.



Customs of the Sparrow Clan

The creation of the Sparrow is often regarded as one of the byproducts of the First Yasuki War, when Doji Onegano, much to his horror and dismay, was granted Minor Clan Daimyo status – more as a punishment than anything else. Onegano hastened to retire to a monastery in Phoenix lands rather than take on the Championship of a clan destined to be poor, leaving the nascent clan in the hands of his son, Suzume – the real culprit of his disgrace – and his son in the hands of his sister. Fortunately, Onegano's sister was a wiser and more compassionate soul than he, and a lot more idealistic. Under her guidance, Suzume set out to forge a new clan, based on the principles of noble poverty and spirituality through asceticism.

The Sparrow, despite their harsh existence, retain the love of beauty and the arts that they inherited from their Crane ancestors. And while the Sparrow can not afford the grand gardens, and awe-inspiring architecture that is so prevalent in the lands of wealthier clans, like the Crane, Phoenix and Mantis, nor have they the time or manpower to allocate to such endeavors, they have learned to create beauty from the most available and inexpensive of things. Every Sparrow house's interior is decorated with intricate works of *sumi-e* paintings, beautiful calligraphy of *haiku* poetry, and colorful *ikebana*, the latter often made of flowers their cousins among the Crane would scoff at, but arranged with such expertise by the Sparrow that they give even *Kakita* artisans pause.

The Sparrow also uphold the Crane tradition of *iai*. But for the Sparrow, *iaijutsu* is not merely an art, but a means by which to attune one's mind and achieve serenity. Among the Sparrow, the rituals of *iaijutsu* often replace meditation in the pursuit of inner harmony and peace, and oneness with the world.

The greatest of Sparrow artistic pursuits, however, at least in their minds, is the art of storytelling. Almost all Suzume samurai train in the art to some degree, as this has become the main means by which the clan preserves its history and traditions. This is due to the uselessness of recording such things on paper, as it tends to disinte-

grate rather quickly in the humid weather of the Sparrow lands.

It is worth noticing that all arts practiced by the Sparrow are of an ephemeral nature. The Sparrow do not believe that matter and material objects have truly an intrinsic value to them, and therefore they focus their arts on that which exists only briefly. This belief has shaped Sparrow samurai into devoted hard workers, and scholar-warriors with a stoic demeanor and philosophical tendencies.

Birth

While Sparrow births are always a joyous occasion, the Sparrow have preserved the reserved nature of Crane birth celebration. The reasoning for that reserve is different, however. While among the Crane lack of ostentation is meant to ward off evil spirits, among the Sparrow it is, to a large degree, a necessity of life. The poverty of the Sparrow means that they can not afford the lavish celebrations so prevalent among the Scorpion, for example. This also means that the Sparrow can not afford to allow new parents more than the bare minimum of relief time from their duties.

After a birth has occurred, the new parents usually invite only their close family and friends to visit. The Master of the couple is also usually invited to attend and give his blessing to the new baby. Those who come normally bring gifts, but these tend to be practical and simple, and more often than not, crafted by the giver of the present. Usually these gifts are objects that would ease the lives of the parents in the first year of the child's life, so cribs, simple wooden toys, baby clothes, and similar objects are the most common. Normally, the relatives and friends of the parents gather in order to decide beforehand who would bring what to the couple, so as to avoid wastefulness, and generally the greater the undertaking in the creation of the gift, the closer that person feels for the couple.

Gempukku

The gempukku ceremony of the Sparrow has elements that hark back to the traditional ceremonies of the Crane Clan. But these have been mixed with unique elements, representing the culture and life of the Sparrow.

Once a year, Kyuden Suzume holds an intra-clan tournament meant to check the skills of all those judged by their sensei to have reached a level of skill to allow them to participate in this event. The tournament lasts for two days, and is very reminiscent of Crane gempukku ceremonies, but on a more modest scale. Like the Crane ceremony, the tests cover many of the aspects ruling a samurai's life, and candidates must prove their knowledge of heraldry, law, etiquette, bushido, and farming lore. They must show their creativity in tests of poetry, oration, ikebana, origami, and painting. Finally, they must demonstrate their physical abilities in tests of athleticism, kenjutsu, and agricultural labor.

The two most important tests, however are reserved for the second day: a tournament of iaijutsu and a competition of storytelling.

In the iaijutsu competition, not only the actual result is tested, but also the restraint the participants show, and the reverence and general attitude the candidates demonstrate in approaching this most revered of martial skills.

In the storytelling competition, the candidate may choose to retell a story from the history of the clan or the Empire, or compose an allegorical tale demonstrating an understanding of the values and philosophy of the Sparrow. In the first case, the subject matter is naturally not expected to be original, and the candidate is tested on his ability to present a familiar topic in a way that complies with tradition, and yet presented in a way that is fresh and artistically valuable. The candidate must also make it clear why the subject of his story is important and worthwhile, not just to himself, but to any samurai. Candidates are discouraged from banal or "safe" topics, so if one chooses, for example to retell the story of the creation of the Sparrow, his presentation will have to be very special and original for him to have any chance at passing the test successfully. In the second case, the candidate must offer an original tale in a way that is engaging, artistically pleasing, thought-provoking, and relevant to his status as a Sparrow.

The winners of the Kyuden Suzume Tournament are hailed for their success and can usually expect a prestigious appointment once they have passed the final test and become full members of the clan.

For there is one more test, a secret one, that takes place within a week of the tournament. To be a samurai, and a Sparrow, no less, isn't just a question of skill. Thus, the gempukku of the Sparrow Clan also checks the maturity of the candidate, his devotion to the principles of the clan, and his ability to make sacrifices on its behalf. In this test the candidate is brought before his sensei and family, and there the sensei speaks of the Sparrow's dedication to poverty and eschewing of all things of material value. Then he tells the candidate that now is the time to prove his adulthood and devotion to the tenets of his clan. He is then told that he should fetch the thing he cherishes most in the world, which he will then be asked to relinquish forever. Once the item is brought, the family and sensei consider whether this truly is the item most cherished by the candidate. The Sparrow know that this is a highly subjective request, and therefore each candidates is subtly approached and discreetly asked about this subject in the months prior to the test. But even so, the gleaned information can not be expected to be fully accurate. And so, as long as the candidate's choice is reasonable and accepted by the sensei, the candidate passes the test, and will receive respected duties for the clan. If the candidate's choice is deemed unreasonable, he is given one more chance to rectify his choice. If his second choice is still unsuitable, this person will get the worst assignments possible as a samurai. He will be tasked with the most difficult work and his stipend will be so little (even by Sparrow standards) that he will live as the poorest of the peasants, with very little hope to improve his status in the future. Many of those who failed the final test resent this treatment and leave the clan to become ronin. Others, maybe wiser, try hard to redeem

themselves by accepting this harsh punishment. Some even succeed sometimes.

Courtship

With money and possession being of so little consequence to the Suzume, and with the little political power they hold, station is not as powerful a motivation for them as it is for other clans. For this reason, the lords of the Sparrow allow their subordinates to choose their spouses with a liberty that is seldom given to samurai of other clans. Still, the Sparrow champions retain the right to approve all marriages within the clan, and, on occasion, have been known to withhold their consent to betrothals.

Sparrow weddings are extremely modest and traditional. The only way, in fact, by which they deviate from what tradition dictates, is that the groom and the bride both compose two haiku. Each betrothed presents his pair of haiku to his spouse, who then chooses one of the two to read aloud during the ceremony, while the other remains a secret only the two of them share.

Superstition

The Suzume believe that idleness attracts evil spirits, *gaki* in particular. For this reason most Suzume, even when they take a rest from their hard toil in the fields, always engage in some minor tasks – carving wood, scribbling sketches, and similar works.

Sweeping the floor is believed to cleanse a house of malicious spirits, and so one can often see groups of women vigorously sweeping floors for hours in and around the homes of sick people, or women in labor.

Rats are considered to be harbingers of bad luck, and for this reason barn owls are seen as an omen of good luck, and it is not uncommon to see Sparrow folk placing birdhouses in trees or on poles, in the hope that barn owls might nest in them. On the other hand vultures are considered ill omens, and when they perch on a roof, it is believed that at least one of the persons residing there will die soon.

War

The Suzume are a practical and hard working lot and generally don't have the time or inclination to indulge in daydreaming about glory in battle, as seems to be so popular among the samurai of the Great Clans. They are simply too busy earning their livelihood from their unyielding land to hope for the wanton bloodshed and waste of human life that war demands.

This does not mean that the Sparrow shy away from war when it comes knocking on their door, and the Sparrow samurai are among the most respected bushi of the Minor Clans. In the past, the Sparrow have entered several alliances with other Minor Clans either to guarantee mutual defense, as was in the Three Men Alliance, or in order to care for those hurt by the warmongering of the Great Clans, as was in Yoritomo's Alliance. However, now more than ever, they are not secure in these former alliances. The Sparrow are the last standing clan of the Three Men Alliance, and Yoritomo's Alliance dissolved at the end of the Clan War. As a result the Sparrow is one

of the most vocal supporters of the Minor Clan Alliance which has formed in the past decade, and have been trying to strengthen their ancient ties to their cousins – the Crane Clan.

Retirement

The Sparrow consider retirement as a reward for a life filled with hard toil, and generally slip into life as monks more easily than most samurai do. The asceticism of life as a monk is nothing new to them, and working alongside peasants is also not a great novelty. After all, in many ways their whole lives are almost monastic even before retirement.

The Sparrow also take easily to the study of the Tao and the Fortunes, and their habit of memorizing stories, honed from a young age, makes it easier for them to embark on the path to enlightenment.

Funerals

Funerals are a traditional affair for the most part among the Suzume. The only departure from conventions is that before the cremation ceremony, a small knife is placed on the chest of the deceased to ward off evil spirits which might wish to interfere with the journey of his soul to Meido.

The ceremony concludes with a storyteller coming forward and weaving the life story of the deceased into a story. This act of creation is always an impromptu affair, as composing or rehearsing it beforehand is believed to attract evil spirits.



Customs of the Tortoise Clan

The Tortoise is one of the least understood clans in the Empire. So much so, that many of the other clans honestly believe it has no right to exist, and are puzzled by the fact that the Emperors and the Imperial Families not only suffer it to exist, but keep it close to them like no other clan. But the truth is, that while the Monkey maintains a close relationship with the Imperial House, and wins respect from all the samurai caste almost as if they actually were Imperials, no clan is truly as close to the Emperor's families as the Tortoise. For it is the Tortoise who do the Emperor's dirty work.

The ignominy that their duties cause gives the Tortoise reason for concern whenever a new Emperor ascends to the throne. When the Emperor, such as the first Toturi,

is not a direct descendant of the previous one, there is a larger concern, lest he does not realize the clan's importance and contributions to the empire. But aside from this risk, the Tortoise do not mind their shady reputation and, for the most part, prefer it this way.

Ever since the founding of the Tortoise Clan, in the years following the Battle of the Raging Seas, it has been tasked with a mission it has been commanded to keep secret – the Tortoise Clan's duties are to obtain both information and goods from the gaijin world that surrounds the Empire, for the benefit of Emperor and the Imperial Families. Agasha Kasuga, the founder of the clan, used the expertise of his Yasuki-born followers in trade and the seas, which he and his successors honed to create highly specialized and efficient methods, aimed at gathering information and exposing the secrets of the outside world, and eliminating (or at least exposing) the threats it might pose to Rokugan.

As a result, the clan evolved into a small seafaring clan with almost as many secrets as the Clan of Secrets itself, the Scorpion.

Birth

The Tortoise Clan has always been one of the smaller Minor Clans, with its population never having been greater than one thousand. This is, of course, according to a plan, so that the Tortoise would be able to continue its operations without attracting too much unwanted attention. For this reason, the Tortoise is the only group in the Empire to enforce a birth control policy, where each couple is allotted a quota of children they are allowed to bring to the world. Overstepping this quota is penalized, although a samurai may request to "use" the unfulfilled quota of other clansmates who have not met theirs and that cannot, or would not meet it. This way the clan has managed to maintain its size almost unchanged in the centuries since its creation in the 5th century.

For this reason, the arrival of a new child is an eagerly anticipated event for the Tortoise, and the celebrations that surround each birth last for days, and often involve the drinking of sake and more exotic drinks from overseas. Because of the low number of children Tortoise families are allowed to have, and the relative wealth of the clan as a whole, the children of the Tortoise tend to be somewhat more coddled and pampered than the average member of the samurai caste, although their training as they mature knocks a lot of their sense of entitlement out of them (to varying degree of success).

It is a common belief among the Tortoise, that people born at sea have a special connection to Suitengu, the Fortune of the sea, and that ships staffed by such people have a lower chance of attracting his ire. For this reason, women in the final stage of their pregnancy will try to spend as much time at sea, so that their children are born on these voyages.

Gempukku

Smugglers, spies, manipulators, merchants, sailors, and warriors – life as a Tortoise involves the use of a large variety of necessary skills. A Tortoise must always be ready for the unexpected and the gempukku ceremo-

nies of the clan reflect that. There isn't a single gempukku trial for the Tortoise. Instead the Tortoise have devised several trials that await the candidates. Each candidate is tested three times, each time with a different trial, not knowing beforehand which test he will endure, or even when they would be held. Some of these trials are described here:

- One of these trials checks the candidate's navigation skills. In this trial the candidate is taken blindfolded to the open sea, there the blindfold is taken off, and he is abandoned along with a seasoned Tortoise sailor in a boat, and he is supposed to navigate back to the port of origin, using the equipment and maps left for him in the boat. The sailor supervising the trial may assist in the rowing of the boat, but may not help in the steering or navigating of the boat, except in dire situations. He is mainly there to make sure the candidate doesn't get hopelessly lost, or injures himself in some way, and his intervention usually means that the candidate has failed his trial (barring some outside occurrence, which is no fault of the candidate, such as volatile weather or something similar). The candidate is not taken more than a few hours away from shore, and the candidate is judged by the amount of time it takes him to get back to shore.

- In another trial the candidate is given a random person as a target, and he is supposed to approach that person and befriend him, gaining his confidence enough to get that person to tell him some personal secret. This trial should be completed in a maximum of a few hours.

- In yet another trial, two candidates are set against one another – one must find a specific item, described to him before the trial begins, and get it to a specific predetermined location, while the other is supposed to prevent the first from achieving his goal. Failing to achieve one's goal in this trial does not mean automatic failure, as it is certain that at least one candidate would fail. Instead the candidates are judged by the ingenuity and inventiveness they reveal while trying to achieve their goals.

- Other trials involve demonstrations of martial skills, not only kenjutsu, but also of the peasant weapons used by the Tortoise at sea (where a daisho would rust from the spray of the sea).

- In another trial the candidate's commerce skills and instincts are tested, as he is supposed to negotiate to purchase or the sale of some items for the clan. This deal is a real deal where actual items and money change hands, but they are of negligible significance. The candidate, however is told that the transaction is of great importance, and that he mustn't fail in getting a good deal in it. The candidate's composure and calm are tested here as much as his ability to haggle.

After the candidate has completed his three trials, he is brought before his sensei, and granted his daisho, in front of his family and friends. He then takes an oath of service to the Tortoise Clan and the Emperor.

Courtship

Few clans are as meticulous in their arrangements of their members' marriages as the Tortoise. The small size of the clan means that familial relationship within the clans are complicated, and therefore it is in the clan's

interest to keep the bloodlines as diverse as possible, but there are few outside the Tortoise who would marry into the despised clan. This means that it is even rarer for a Tortoise to marry out of love than it is in almost any other clan. Parents are directed to matchmakers almost as soon as their child is born and declared to be in good health. And usually by the time a child reaches his gempukku he has some idea of whom he will marry.

Marriage ceremonies in the Tortoise Clan tend to be short and efficient, following tradition to the letter, but adding little more. The celebrations that follow are often quite lavish, especially when involving the higher tiers of the clan, its diplomats, or if one of the newlyweds is of a different clan.

Superstition

The Tortoise believe that people born at sea are the property of Suitengu, the fortune of the seas, and for this reason he is less volatile towards them than he is towards others, but that also means that these people must return to him when their lives are over. Tortoise samurai make sure that their ashes are scattered at sea after their death, even if they have retired to a monastery. Failure to do so may bring forth the rage of the sea Fortune upon the offender's entire family and even the entire clan, as Suitengu seeks out that which he was promised.

The Tortoise believe that purified sea salt is a ward against evil spirits, and therefore most Tortoise carry a small satchel filled with sea salt blessed by a shugenja. A Tortoise would be horrified at a suggestion of using that salt for seasoning food, except in the case of people suffering from severe illnesses, in which case the salt is supposed to help them restore the harmony within their body.

Sea birds are generally considered to be a good omen, but having one die on your boat is one of the worst omens a Tortoise can imagine, as is allowing such a bird to die. For this reason, if a wounded, ill, or exhausted sea bird lands on a Tortoise vessel it will receive medical attention as good as if it were a crew member. Should it die anyway, the boat would go ashore as soon as possible, to be purified by a shugenja, as will all of its crew and passengers.

War

The Tortoise, prepare themselves for many dramatically different types of combat. From their fortress in North Hub Village, they keep a vigil over Otsan Uchi, the former Imperial Capital. They patrol and police the streets of this devastated city, hunting any Tainted creatures, undead, or minions of the Shadow Dragon remaining within since the attack that destroyed it, and investigating any other illicit activity that may take place there. In this task they are assisted by the Yotsu Vassal Family of the Seppun, with whom the Tortoise maintain close ties, and even share a common dojo in the Dawn Tower, and by the Wolf Legion. Until recently, some Nezumi also assisted the Tortoise, but they have since disappeared.

In addition to this, as a primarily seafaring clan, the Tortoise are weary of any pirate activity on the high seas, and train diligently to face and defeat any such attack

upon their vessels. That is, of course, when they are not themselves the pirates...

The Tortoise have an alliance with the Mantis, and were even granted a port on the Mantis Isles (Distant Turtle City), near Shiro no Inazuma; a port which they use to spy on the activities of the Mantis, and make sure that no corruption spreads among their allies. They consider this activity to be in line with their alliance with the Mantis, as they believe they only have the best interests of the Mantis at heart, but they have been known to share their information on the Mantis with their Seppun allies.

Finally, no other Minor Clan has worked so hard for the formation and strengthening of the Minor Clan Alliance, nor are any of them as invested in its success. The Tortoise see this alliance as a guarantee of solidarity between the Minor Clans, and as a tool to gain more power, as well as some extra layer of protection, for all Minor Clans, but for themselves especially.

Retirement

Retirement is not something that is much thought of by the Tortoise. Few families in the Empire are as materialistic as the Kasuga, and they find it hard to leave their luxurious lives for the austerity of monastic life. Before the fall of the Hantei line, those few Tortoise who did retire usually joined the Four Temples, seeing this as a continuation of their service for their former daimyo, the Emperor himself, but since the rise of Toturi I, and his relinquishing of the championship of the Tortoise, fewer Tortoise have been willing to make that transition.

Funerals

As has been mentioned before, Tortoise funerals center around the sea. After the cremation ceremony, those who attend the funeral follow its ashes as they are taken towards White Stag. The ashes of those who spent their lives at sea are then taken on a boat by a member of their family who then returns them to Suitengu. Those who spent most of their lives on land (like the courtiers of the clan) have their ashes scattered to the winds over the sea, off the cliffs of White Stag.

Badger, Bat, Dragonfly, Monkey, Oriole, Sparrow and Tortoise clans: Callimachus

Boar and Ox clans: Hida Tango

Fox clan: Mike Brodu & Callimachus

Hare clan: Bayushi Kensuke, Mike Brodu & Callimachus

Snake clan: Akodo Harubi

The Army of the Alliance

A "Masters of War" Official Supplement

BY SHAWN CARMAN

Headquarters: Koeru Mura
Rikugunshokan: Morito
Shireikan: Toku Koto, Usagi Genchi
Officers of Note: Kazumasa, Taisa of the Twenty-Seventh Legion (Scout Legion)

The Army of the Alliance

To describe the combined military forces of the Minor Clans that comprise the Minor Clan Alliance as an army would be a generous exaggeration. While the combined population of the Alliance is easily equal to that of a Great Clan, the notion of assembling an entire army and maintaining them in one place for any length of time is completely absurd; most Minor Clans struggle to maintain the resources necessary for their own number and the small amount they contribute to the Alliance as a whole, much less for a concentration of samurai large enough to constitute an army. Considering that the Alliance's various farmlands and resources are scattered all across the face of the Empire, and the cost of transporting large amounts of food and supplies, and the improbability of maintaining a standing army becomes more understandable.

The Minor Clan Alliance came into existence only a short time ago, relatively speaking. It was less than a decade ago that the Minor Clans convened a conference in an unassuming meeting house in Toshi Ranbo, and determined that it would be to their advantage to work together in order to look after their mutual best interests. Time and time again, after all, various crises had caused the Great Clans to overlook them entirely, and it was patently obvious that the Minor Clans would never be a priority for them. Further

more, in light of a new Emperor, and with the question of whether or not the Great Clans would fully accept his rule still hanging over the Empire, it was unknown whether or not the Emperor and the clans would continue to recognize the Imperial edict forbidding war against the Minor Clans. Thus, the Minor Clan Alliance was born.

One of the first topics of discussion among the leaders of the Alliance was the matter of military might. The Minor Clans were acutely aware of the success enjoyed during the Clan War by the force of the united Minor Clans, a force that many of their parents or grandparents had participated in. Lacking the manpower of the Mantis, Wasp, and Centipede clans, and the vast resources of the Mantis, the Alliance could ill afford to maintain such a large military force, however. While the Tortoise were willing to contribute as much of their resources as they could, and in recent years the reinvigorated Badger have contributed a significant amount as well, the simple fact remains that the Alliance could not afford to maintain a large army. Fortunately, however, an alternative presented itself.

The village of Koeru Mura, already an important location for the Minor Clans, was designated the military center for the Alliance. The surplus of rice purchased by the Minor Clans there every season was earmarked for the occupants of a series of barracks that were constructed using Tortoise gold. Each clan sent a few of their greatest warriors and sensei to begin training together. Then, when these men were ready, they began sending word to their home provinces to send additional warriors, first by the dozen, then hundred, and eventually in the thousands. Koeru Mura became a training ground where Minor Clan samurai were taught to work together, using their abilities in conjunction with one another to accomplish more than they could separately. At first all these forces were sent back to their home provinces,



but eventually a small number began to be assigned to remain within Koeru Mura, so that larger scale training operations could be conducted.

Every man and woman who comes to Koeru Mura for training receives an assignment to a squadron, company, and legion. For the most part the Alliance commanders attempt to keep entire legions contained within a single clan in order to facilitate movement and allocation. A handful of legions consist of mixed forces, however. Thus far, the training continues as the Alliance attempts to fill the ranks to create a full, forty-eight legion army. Thus far, only thirty-one legions worth of troops have undergone training at Koeru Mura and been formally assigned unit designations. Additionally, the Tsuruchi have honored their long history of alliance with the other Minor Clans and pledged one legion of Tsuruchi archers to be deployed with the Alliance at their discretion.

The supreme military commander of the Alliance's forces is Morito, the daimyo of the Ox Clan. Morito is easily the most decorated and experienced commander in all the Minor Clans, and while he takes great care to keep abreast of developments in Koeru Mura, he has as yet had little to do with the events there other than three different visits to inspect the facilities and progress. Other commanders within the army are appointed by the Alliance court, although Morito has the option to veto any choice he feels is not suitable to lead men into battle.

Elite Units in the Alliance Army

First Legion	Legion of Koeru Mura
Third Legion, 1st through 3rd companies	Badger Heavy Elite
Seventh through Ninth Legions	Ox Chargers
Twelfth through Fifteenth Legions	Usagi Skirmishers
Thirty-second Legion	Tsuruchi Archers

Stronghold: Koeru Mura

The village of Koeru Mura is a largely unremarkable settlement that has had a very quiet, if profitable history for most of its existence. The village, which is rapidly becoming a small city, sits amid some of the most fertile farmlands situation outside the borders of the Great Clans, and each year the peasants who work its fields have produced a surplus above what is required for their taxes and to feed those who dwell within. This surplus has traditionally been sold to the various Minor Clans who have contributed to protect the village from bandits, overzealous ronin, and any number of other threats that have presented themselves. Once the Alliance was formed a few short years ago, the protection offered by the various Minor Clans became a more formalized, organized affair, which has benefited both the clans as well as the people of Koeru Mura.

Function: Koeru Mura is both a barracks for what there is of the Alliance's standing forces, and a training ground for new troops being incorporated into its existing military structure. As such, there is a tremendous amount of traffic into and out of the village on a regular basis, with dozens or even hundreds of bushi departing and being replaced each month.

Authorities: Prior to the Alliance's increased involvement, the area's provincial governor was the supreme authority in the absence of the Imperial tax collector, who visited the region only twice yearly. The standing governor was previously a ronin of some small repute, who was offered fealty by the Hare Clan after the Alliance began to annex all ronin functions within the city. The governor, now known as Usagi Tikashi, saw the offer not only as an opportunity to better his own lot, but that of his men and the village as a whole. He accepted after a very brief period of consideration. Almost all of his men, a few dozen ronin who worked to protect the area prior to the Alliance's formation, received similar offers from various clans within the first six months of the Alliance's occupation of the city.

Facilities: Despite its importance, Koeru Mura is still a relatively small, remote town with meager resources at its disposal. Nothing within it could rival even the smallest stronghold belonging to the military of any Great Clan, but it has enough to serve the minimalist needs of the Minor Clan Alliance. It has enough barrack space to house five legions, although the accommodations are sparse at best, numerous dojo and temples to provide services for the troops stationed there, and a training grounds where a few hundred bushi can assemble at any given time. Thus far the Alliance has limited the size of the training grounds in order to keep from threatening the fertile fields surrounding the area.

Forces: Although a lynchpin of the Minor Clan Alliance's military might, there are still relatively few forces assigned to Koeru Mura; the Alliance simply cannot afford to maintain any significant number of troops in one spot without risking a serious supply problem. With that in mind, the following troops are semi-permanently assigned to Koeru Mura:

- The Legion of Koeru Mura (First Legion)
- The Seventh Legion (Ox Chargers)
- The Thirteen Legion (Hare Skirmishers)
- Approximately five hundred soldiers in training, without unit designations

Elite Unit: Legion of Koeru

The men and women who defend the village of Koeru Mura are perhaps the most dangerous warriors of the entire Minor Clan Alliance. They have been granted leave to train the various forces who come to the village, preparing them for their role in the Alliance army, then sending them back to their homes to await any possible mobilization. Then they begin the process anew with a new group of trainees. In the process of training such a diverse group, all with varying levels of experience and military prowess, the officers who command the Legion of Koeru Mura have become some of the most dangerous samurai in the entire region, a fact of which most Great Clans are blissfully unaware.

NEW PATH Legion of Koeru

Technique Rank: 5

Path of Entry: Any Minor Clan Bushi School 4

Path of Egress: Re-enter the same School at Rank 5

Requirements: Any Weapon Skill at rank 6

TECHNIQUE: ONE THOUSAND STYLES

The Legion teaches its members to embrace their own training and complement it with an understanding of other styles, allowing them to choose the most effective stances from dozens of diverse styles. You may spend a Void Point to activate this technique. When you do so, choose any Rank 1, Rank 2, or Rank 3 Technique that you do not possess; this technique must belong to a Minor Clan bushi school. The chosen technique replaces this technique for one minute, at which time you lose access to the chosen technique and regain access to this technique.

Usagi Genchi

SENIOR HARE SENSEI OF KOERU MURA DOJO

School/Rank: Usagi Bushi 4 / Legion of Koeru Mura 1

Air: 2	Earth: 5	Fire: 3	Water: 3	Void: 4
Reflexes: 4		Agility: 4	Perception: 5	
Honor: 2.9		Glory: 4.2		Status: 3.3

Skills: Athletics (Running) 5, Deceit (Intimidation) 3, Hunting 6, Iaijutsu 2, Instruction 5, Investigation 4, Jiu-jitsu 2, Kenjutsu 5, Knives 7, Know the School (Maho-tsukai) 3, Kyujutsu 4, Lore: Shadowlands 4, Polearms 2, Spears 3, Staves 2, Theology 2

Advantages: Heart of Vengeance (Oni), Irreproachable

Disadvantages: Benten's Curse, Driven (Destroy oni)

Kata: Striking as Earth, Striking as Fire

Among the Hare Clan, Usagi Genchi is as much myth as man. Young Hare children alternately tell one another stories of the man to terrify each other, and pretend to be him while at play in the woods near their home. Their parents look upon him with reverence and respect, and yet at the same time fear his intensity and hope to avoid his scrutiny. All these things Genchi has earned, for he is at once a legend, and a monster.

In his youth, Genchi was a respected but largely unremarkable magistrate. He was content to maintain the status quo, and resented any implication that things in his province were amiss. Fortunately, there was very rarely anything that truly required his attention, with common squabbles between citizens the most frequent problem he had to deal with. Unfortunately, it was into this peaceful environment that a terrible blight came, and Genchi was too complacent to realize the threat before it manifested. A maho-tsukai foolishly attempted to barter with a demon, and failed, unleashing an extremely old and powerful Sanru no Oni into Genchi's home village. The beast slaughtered more than half the town before it was finally driven away, and even then more by boredom than anything else. Genchi's beloved parents were among



the dead, as was his younger brother and his betrothed. Something inside the jovial young man died along with his family, and in its place a horror was born.

Genchi tracked the beast for more than a hundred miles, finally catching it in a remote, unoccupied forest. The two fought, and in the end Genchi's sheer determination and complete disregard for his own safety won the day. The demon was slain, but much to Genchi's horror, he survived. He was scarred, terribly scarred, but his wounds did not claim him and, to everyone's surprise, no Taint ever manifested from the wound. Month after month, the recovering magistrate was visited by the Kuni, and month after month they proclaimed him pure. Eventually, they stopped coming, and Genchi had no choice but to accept that he was intended to live. His home village was nothing more than a ghost town, with its survivors scattered to the four winds and fire having claimed most of what the demon did not destroy. Genchi had nothing. For all intents and purposes, he was dead.

In all the years since his "death," Genchi has filled the hole in his soul with violence. He has hunted all manner of demons, working alongside the Kuni, the Asako, and even the secretive Kuroiban. His body has become a tangled roadmap of scars, and his ability to interact normally with others has been permanently crippled. In the process, however, he has learned more about killing than perhaps any Hare that has ever lived, and for this reason he was approached about becoming a sensei for the Koeru Mura Dojo. At first he declined, but then he was reminded that if he died, all he had learned would be lost. Even then he resisted, until he was commanded by his daimyo to serve, and he has done so without complaint. Those who trained beneath him, or even those who must work alongside him in the dojo, have complained enough for everyone involved.

Shawn Carman

The Firefly Clan

Note that the Firefly Clan only ever appeared in *Way of the Daimyo*, used as an example for creating a minor clan and schools. As such, it does not exist in L5R canon.



Founding of the Clan

The year was 1136, and a young imperial magistrate named Shinjo Jainu was assigned to a decrepit tower somewhere between Otsan Uchi and the Phoenix lands, overlooking the shore. Understanding that he could not, however, keep his post alone, he hired a band of ronin to assist him, on his own income. With their help, he could maintain regular patrols and a permanent force in the area.

For many years Jainu was faithful to his duty, although it was an uneventful one. That all changed quickly one brisk spring morning in 1152, when a force of Yobanjin ships was spotted on the horizon. The small invasion force had plans to raid Rokugan further south, but a storm had swept them toward Jainu's territory.

It had been an especially difficult battle for Shinjo Jainu and his brave ronin, being outnumbered. Their greater martial prowess, and the tactical advantage the tower provided, allowed them to delay the Yobanjin attack long enough for Seppun legionnaires to assist, and drive the gaijin back into the ocean.

Two years after the War against the Spirits, Emperor Toturi I recognized the bravery of Jainu and his men, and awarded them minor clan status. Jainu decided to name the clan the Firefly, after the fires they had maintained along the coast, and took the family name Hotaru, after his father.

The new found status of the Firefly wasn't always to their advantage; immediately after the recognition, and without the support of their former patrons, the samurai of the Firefly had to find a means to survival. These early years are remembered as the hardest in the history of the clan, but Jainu managed to reach agreements with the Agasha and Kasuga, while the Otomo provided some

financial support to the Firefly in exchange for patrolling the coast. This meager income helped to support the many ronin that had joined the new clan.

The Lion razing of Otsan Uchi, after the Shadowlands invasion of 1159, was a huge blow to the small clan. Their duty of patrolling the nearby coastal regions had lost much of its importance and prestige. It also meant that less ships were passing through, which in turn meant fewer resources, and less trade. Another problem was the small pockets of Shadowlands activity in the area. It is during these turbulent times for the clan that the daimyo Jainu passed away due to old age and stress.

With the clan in such a state of disarray, Jainu's wife Shonoko took over leadership, until such time that their young son (also named Jainu) could assume his birthright. Because of their countless internal problems, the Firefly Clan withdrew themselves from much of Rokugan's public life. In the time roughly between the second Yasuki War and the March of the Four Winds, very little was heard from Shonoko's clan, to the extent that some had even almost forgotten about their existence. The Tortoise abandoned them to their fate, offering to help to rebuild their resources, while the leadership of the Agasha had much more pressing concerns than the brave coastal samurai. The nearby Agasha villagers and magistrates, however, had not forgotten their promise to their little cousins and continued to help whenever possible.

Regardless of the help from other honorable samurai, the burden was still too heavy. Many among the clan deserted, returning to a ronin life. In a desperate attempt to save her clan, Shonoko modified the clan's taxation system, allowing fisherman to first take enough food to feed their families, with only the remainder being subject to taxes. Even this, however, proved insufficient. But Shonoko eventually managed to ensure the future of the clan, when she negotiated the protection of Tortoise ships and trading caravans of the Phoenix carrying supplies to the building sites of the destroyed Hub villages. With some clever political maneuvering, she also managed to obtain some supplies from the Seppun, and the help of the Miya's Emperor's Blessing.

Shortly after being hailed as a hero for snatching the future of the clan from the jaws of extinction, Shonoko died of starvation. Before that day, no one in the clan knew of their daimyo's personal deed of solidarity. Since then, on every anniversary of her death, the Firefly Clan honors the memory of Shonoko's ultimate sacrifice for her people with a day of fasting.

The young Jainu II took her place. One of his first acts as new daimyo of the Firefly was to assist the Agasha during the War of Thunder and Fire. However, as the Firefly warriors knew they posed no serious threat to the troops of the Mantis, they kept their tradition of

watchman by constantly alerting the Phoenix of Mantis approach and movements. As Yoritomo Naizen moved his troops farther away to the north, the Firefly's role in the conflict decreased, which allowed Jainu II to focus his attention on the rebuilding of his clan.

Today, the Firefly Clan consists of three fishing villages, and about sixty samurai. While they produce enough food and goods to supply themselves, they have little to trade or stock. This is also not helped by the fact that there is little arable land within the clan's territory. Thus, the clan is constantly looking for more opportunities to increase its wealth.

Geography & Economy

It has been almost two decades since the Emerald Champion Seppun Toshiken handed over the lands now known as the Firefly province. The focal point of the area is a great central watchtower, known as Hotaru Torid-e, complemented by two smaller towers in the north and south. They serve as the Firefly keep, as well as the home of the daimyo.

Not far away from the second tower in the north, copper ore has recently been discovered, and mining started immediately. So far the clan has used little of the metal for themselves, but it has proved valuable for trading. In particular, the Tsi of the Oriole Clan trade their blacksmithing skills in exchange for the Firefly copper.

Economically, the best assets the clan can offer are the expertise of their bushi at patrolling and guarding, as well as their peasants' fishing accomplishments. Firefly fishermen are beginning to make a name for themselves as being able to catch exceptionally rare fish, for which richer samurai will pay extravagant prices to satisfy their connoisseur tastes. A particularly popular specimen is the Red Sea Bream (or akadai), which is often served on auspicious occasions. This market is being kept under tight reins by Jainu II however, who has introduced quotas to prevent flooding the market, and the extinction of these valuable fish. The Firefly peasants also created a unique mix of sea salt and dried red algae (nori) that is becoming quite popular in the gourmet circles.

Demography

Shortly after the founding of the clan, Jainu I married one of his lieutenants, Shonoko, in order to quickly establish a line of succession, despite his advanced age. Nearly all of his yoriki, ronin who had served him for years, swore fealty to him. He then had two dozens of samurai at his service. All of those served the clan until their retirement or death, but the clan grew bigger until the destruction of Otsan Uchi. Many of those who joined the clan during its expansion later left when the situation started to take a turn for the worse for the Hotaru family, as they didn't feel the same amount of loyalty to the clan as those who were there at the time of its foundation.

Of the clan's sixty-or-so samurai, a dozen live in the north tower, close to the Phoenix lands, and a handful live in the tower in the south. Most of the remaining samurai

live in Hotaru Torid-e, and a few others in modest residences scattered over the Firefly territory. Nearly none of the original members of the clan are alive; the four remaining are the three sensei of the Hotaru School, and one retired samurai-ko acting as a monk advisor to the young Jainu II. The clan has no shugenja for now, even though they are trying to recruit some from the Forgotten Sons and the Kanosei Furudera order, and only a few shrines, mostly devoted to local minor fortunes of negligible importance, exist on their territory. The most important of these are dedicated to fishermen and the sea fortunes, but even those have suffered through the terrible events of the War in the Heaven.

Customs

The Hotaru samurai have no particular customs of their own. They have been through a lot, and barely a generation has passed since they have been declared a clan. They hold on to many of their traditions as ronin. They patrol their lands extensively and have good relations with the peasantry, who they recognize as having played an essential part in their survival. The only real unique custom they have developed is the widespread use of lanterns: these are used as ornamental pieces in and around their houses quite extensively. All of these lanterns are kept lit all night long. The towers of the Hotaru look like a fire in the dark, and no one walking during the night ever needs a torch of his own as the lights of the houses illumine the entire village.

War

The Hotaru have their own bushi school that was created by Oshio (see the *School Update Project* web supplement updating the schools to the 3rd edition for this school's mechanics). Oshio (who became Hotaru Oshio when the clan was founded) was the hatamoto of the late Hotaru Jainu. He was a talented ronin swordsman that spent his life trying to create his own techniques and fighting style. During his time serving as a yoriki, and with Jainu's help, he created a series of unique kata that eventually evolved into the full-fledged techniques of the Hotaru Bushi School. Oshio died of old age shortly before Jainu's wife. His best students are now the sensei of the school; two of them live and train in the dojo of the Hotaru, and the third in the second tower, to the north. Hotaru Tasami is the head sensei, and he has taken a part in the training of every samurai in the clan at one time or another, and is soon to retire. He is now 50 years old and the only member of the clan older than him is his sister, Narumi, who retired and serve as advisor to the young Jainu II.

Recent Events

Criminal activity has taken a dramatic rise in the region recently. Increasingly, groups of bandits have been seen around the area, moving up north. No one seems to have any explanation for it, but it is starting to worry the

small clan. Also, a group of ronin, who call themselves the Spider Clan, have been offering help and men to the Hotaru. Jaiu II was desperate for such help and gladly accepted. Masahiko (in truth, Daigotsu Masahiko) is the current liaison between the two clans, and lives in the Firefly Tower.

Character: Hotaru Saeba

Hotaru bushi 1 / Minor Clan diplomat 1

Saeba is neither a typical nor an atypical Firefly samurai, since it is difficult to find a common denominator among such a small band of samurai. Saeba has distinguished himself as a cook for a local Phoenix lord. Officially an emissary of the Firefly to the Agasha,

he quickly understood that he needed to prove himself valuable to his host or his clan would lose respect. So he joined a cooking contest in the Crane quarter of the City of the Honored Treaty, and won. Saeba has learned to cook early in his life, as the clan needed expert cooks to make sure the food supplies of the Hotaru were not wasted. He then discovered a talent for the task, and unsurprisingly acquired a great skill in the preparing of fish-based meals.

As a samurai, Saeba isn't actually working as a cook. He is only devoting himself to the mastery of the cooking techniques, and offers his work to the Agasha daimyo of the Omoidasu province. For his efforts, he is awarded valuable gifts that are then sent back to his clan.

Okuma, with Tokkie

Economy of the Minor Clans

Following after the chapter on the economy of Rokugan found in *Emerald Empire*, this article provides information on the resources of each Minor Clan, as well as tables indicating items more common or harder to find in their lands.

This article is based on information found in *Emerald Empire*, *Way of the Minor Clans*, *Secrets of the Mantis*, *Code of Bushido*, and *Art of the Duel*.

Badger Clan Lands

The Badger lands are a rocky maze of mountains, cliffs, ravines, chasms, box canyons, and foothills which are barely adequate for farming. The climate is colder than anywhere else in the Empire, and frequent but rarely heavy snowfalls, which start early in fall and continue until late spring, often leave the Badger provinces inaccessible to any but the most resolute merchants most of the year.

The terraced farmlands are usually grouped around the fortresses and in the springtime, snowmelts will flood the farming fields replenishing their soil with rich nutrients from the mountaintops. These farmlands produce enough wheat and soybeans (rice cannot grow in Badger land) to feed all of the Badger villages. Hunting and fishing supplement the Badger diet: the cold mountain streams are teeming with fish, while wild geese and ducks (which are also raised domestically) are abundant.

The Badgers are blessed with a few iron and copper mines which allow them to trade with the rest of the Empire for much needed goods. It is well known that the Badger have a fondness for music, and particularly enjoy playing wind instruments and percussions. The harsh climate of the Badger mountains is rather unkind

to bowstrings, which explains the prevalence of the nage-yari for war and slings for hunting. The Badger also sometimes employ Rokugani ponies, but only on their safest paths, as the ponies are not sure-footed enough for the rocky mountain trails. During the few decades after the rampage of Hideo no Oni, the mines were deserted as the clan no longer had the manpower to exploit them. During these dark times, the clan's sole source of income was the mercenary work of many Badger samurai. Now that the clan is flourishing again, those mines are slowly being reopened...

Availability and Price of Goods in the Badger Lands

Item	Price	Rarity
Bows and Arrows	+50%	Rare
Bowyer's Kit	+50%	Rare
Heavy Weapons or No-dachi	-20%	Average
Musical Instruments	-20%	Common
Nage-Yari	-30%	Common
Snowshoes	-10%	Common
Spices	+50%	Rare

Bat Clan Lands

Bat lands are very small indeed consisting only of the small island, on which stands the monastery where Komori pretended to retire when he was watching over Yoritomo Kumiko. All in all, Bat lands are even smaller than Tortoise lands. Being part of the same archipelago as the Mantis Isles, the Bat Clan share much of the same climate as the Mantis Clan.

Peasants have only recently begun to flock to the small clan and as such farming is still precarious, but the clan has started producing crops nonetheless. The Bat Clan

produces small amount of rice and tea. For now, farming fields are more of a temporary affair as it is yet unknown if or when the temple will be enlarged or other buildings constructed. Most of the Bat Clan's foodstuffs are products of the sea and Bat diet is often supplemented by exotic fruits, spices, berries, nuts, and edible seeds. They do not hunt animals, partly for the same reasons as the Fox Clan; in respect of the many spirits who often take animal shape.

Unlike the Oriole, the Bat Clan never benefited from a previous focus before becoming a minor clan. As they are still searching for a niche, they have yet to produce many exports. They have managed to make some money by selling tea and pearls, but it remains to be seen if such commerce will remain.

Availability and Price of Goods in the Bat Lands

Item	Price	Rarity
Copies of Religious Texts	-30%	Common
Fishing Kit	-20%	Common
Tea Set	-20%	Average

Boar Clan Lands

Nestled in the westernmost part of the Twilight Mountains, the Boar Clan shared many distinctions with their Crab parents. Their lands were mountainous, but not as inaccessible as those of the Badger; many merchants came to purchase the legendary armors produced by the Boar armorsmiths.

Since their dry mountainous terrain was ill adapted for agriculture, the Boar had few farmlands. Their climate was not suited to the culture of rice, so they mostly made due with barley, wheat, and millet. They also supplemented their diets with hunting: wild boar, small game, and fowl were found in the hilly forests of the Boar lands.

Much like the Crab, the Boar benefited from many jade and iron mines. Boar iron was said to be of extremely high quality and some Kaiu smiths often refused to work with anything less than Boar iron to produce their famous Kaiu steel. The Boar lands were also sprinkled with small mines of other strong minerals, but nowhere near the quantity or quality of their jade and iron mines. Boar ore and craftsmanship was often traded for foodstuff as their armorsmithing skills were seen as legendary. One last type of ore was found in the Boar mountains; mineral fused with the blood of the First Oni. This ore was never mined by the Boar who actually made sure its corruption would not spread, but it eventually attracted the attention of the sinister Agasha Ryuden...

Availability and Price of Goods in the Boar Lands

Item	Price	Rarity
Armor	-20%	Common
Blacksmith's Hammer	-20%	Common
Foodstuff and Sake	+10%	Average
Jade	-20%	Common
Mai-Chong	-30%	Common
Polearms	-10%	Average
Spices	+50%	Rare

Centipede Clan Lands

Tani Senshio (The Valley of the Centipede) which is home to the Centipede Clan (now the Moshi family of the Mantis Clan), is a shelf of land bordered by the peaks of the Mountains of Regret on three of its sides and a cliff overlooking the sea on the fourth. Despite its altitude, Tani Senshio has a temperate climate and receives lots of showers which greatly contributed to the proliferation of thousands of insect species, including a unique red centipede which gave the valley its name. This valley is located to the east of the Treacherous Pass and only two roads lead to it: one from the pass through the mountains and one from the sea. Although not entirely inaccessible, this remoteness means that only those who have business with the Centipede Clan will travel there.

The valley receives ample rainfall throughout the year which makes the valley's soil fertile and allows for bountiful harvests for the Centipede. It is not rare that they produce a surplus of food. Such food is usually traded with other minor clans. Their small coast allows for a few fishing boats to be docked there, providing the Centipede with some fish, crustaceans, and shellfish.

Because of their simple lifestyle and fertile farmlands, the Centipedes are never left wanting for much, except perhaps for scrolls, unusual magical components, and perhaps the material and expertise needed to build a few temples. The Centipede are known for their reverence of Amaterasu. Among the most famous of her temples are the Touching a Miracle Shrine atop Yama Sano Amaterasu and the Shrine of the Sun Goddess at Kyuden Moshi No Machi. Those temples, as well as those dedicated to Lord Sun, attract a few religious pilgrims. The small red centipedes which populate the valley are reputed to have medicinal properties. The humid climate of the valley also allows the Centipede Clan to maintain a few silk-worm farms. Centipede samurai are very fond of mirrors and often use it to reflect the rays of the sun in order to light the remote areas of their dwellings instead of relying on lanterns or torches.

Availability and Price of Goods in the Centipede Lands

Item	Price	Rarity
Books, Paper, and Parchment	+10%	Average
Food/Traveler's Rations	-20%	Common
Lucky Cricket	-20%	Common
Medicine Kit	-10%	Average
Mirrors	+30%	Common
Silk Clothing and Silk	-20%	Common
Effigy of Amaterasu/Yakamo	-30%	Common

Dragonfly Clan Lands

The Dragonfly are nestled in the foothills of the Dragon mountains. They share much of the same weather as the Dragon lands, but are spared the more extreme conditions prevalent in the higher lands. The Dragonfly lands are easily accessible, and in fact, many merchants prefer to stop here and trade with the few Mirumoto patrols that are sometimes there rather than to continue their journey through the Dragon Mountains...

The Dragonfly lands are difficult but not as impossible to farm as the lands of other minor clans. Their lands do yield crops, but only after hard work, and the harvest is generally just enough to provide the Clan with food. Rice can be grown in Dragonfly lands, but still a lot of their food production consists of wheat, soybean, and millet. When years have been particularly lean, they have been known to do like their Dragon cousins and eat "mountain tuna."

On the rare occasions when the Dragonfly produce a surplus of food, it is quickly traded to the Dragon Clan. Before their near destruction at the hands of the Lion, the Dragonfly had many temples dedicated to Amaterasu, the Tao of Shinsei, enlightenment, and ancestor worship dotted throughout their land. A large part of their revenue was from religious pilgrimage. After Isawa Sezarū rebuilt Kyuden Tonbo, the Dragonfly rebuilt only a handful of these temples (it seems they now have changed their focus toward divination). A lot of the land originally dedicated to temples has been returned to farming, which has greatly helped the fledgling Dragonfly survive the few years directly following their near-destruction. The Dragonfly has always been the emissaries of the Dragon clan (and up until the point of his death, Isawa Sezarū). This role has always placed the Dragonfly in a position in which it could gain favors from other clans. Surprisingly enough, for a clan living in hilly terrain, they have very few mines to call their own. Finally, the Tonbo Shugenja School is a popular destination among young shugenja from other clans who often wish to exchange and discuss ideas about magic and Kami worship with the rather unorthodox Dragonfly. This sort of scholastic pilgrimage has always been another source of income for the Clan.

Availability and Price of Goods in the Dragonfly Lands

Item	Price	Rarity
Copies of Religious Texts	-10%	Common
Courtier's Cap and Fan	+/-0%	Average
Divination Kit	-30%	Common
Food/Traveler's Rations	+/-0%	Average
Scrolls	-10%	Common

Falcon Clan Lands

Tani Hitokage (Valley of the Spirits), located north of the Twilight Mountains and west of the Shinomen Mori, has long been the home of the Falcon Clan (now the Toritaka family of the Crab Clan). Even though the valley itself has always been fertile thanks to water that flows from the Shinomen Mori, the Falcon Clan has always been poor due to the fact that their peasants were too afraid to lumber the rich Shinomen Mori. Many merchants are scared away by the sinister reputation of the valley, and as such, Falcon have pretty much always dealt with Yasuki merchants who are not as scared of ghosts as other merchants.

The fertile farmlands of the Tani Hitokage have always produced a lot of foodstuff for the Falcon. Unfortunately, a lot of this foodstuff was often stolen by brigands as the Falcon samurai were too few to protect their peasants from both ghosts and bandits. The few peasants

who were courageous or reckless enough to go into the Shinomen Mori could often supplement their diet with rare spices, fruits, nuts, berries, and edible seeds which are available only in the forest... that is, if they came back alive... And if berry picking was perilous, it was even more so for those trying to hunt the many animals found in the forest...

Coming under the protection of the Crab Clan has done a lot for the fledgling minor clan; first, the frequent bandit attacks have been quelled and the peasants are now less fearful of harvesting wood and spices from the Shinomen Mori. They have also started mining diamonds in the Twilight Mountains, which also used to have a reputation as a haunted place. This has given the Falcon a lot of resources it couldn't enjoy back in its minor clan days and has made the Toritaka (and by extension the Crab Clan) wealthier. Crab governance hasn't changed everything though: the Toritaka continue to light thousands of lanterns, candles, and bonfires in order to drive away the night and its evil spirits, and they didn't lose their habit of noting every detail of their encounters with supernatural beings.

Availability and Price of Goods in the Falcon Lands

Item	Price	Rarity
Brazier	+20%	Common
Candle	-10%	Common
Lanterns and Lantern Oil	+30%	Common
Naginata	-10%	Average
Spices	-10%	Average
Writing Paper	+20%	Common

Firefly Clan Lands

The Firefly lands occupy a small stretch of coast between the ruins of Otsan Uchi and the southern Agasha provinces of the Phoenix Clan. Salty wind from the sea and frequent rainfalls makes the Firefly lands cool in the summer and bitterly cold in the winter. This stretch of land is for the most part unfertile and unfit for farming. As the Firefly villages and holdings are rather small and unattractive, they often meet with merchants in Agasha or Tortoise lands instead.

Due to their location, the Firefly rely mostly on fishing for food; they eat brown and red algae (the latter is used to prepare nori), fish, crustacean, and clams. They have a few farms which produce mainly wheat, barley, and vegetables. Firefly diet is also often supplemented by the hunting of wild geese, ducks, and small game, all of which are easily found along the coast.

Being a rather recent clan, the Firefly have a few resources to trade with other clans. They have entered into treaties with both the Agasha family and the Tortoise Clan to extend their patrols into their territory in exchange for foodstuff. They also expect entering a similar agreement with the newly formed Oriole Clan. Among the few things the Firefly export are the Akadai (or Red Sea Bream), a rare fish favored by delicate palates over the Empire, as well as sea salt and nori.

Availability and Price of Goods in the Firefly Lands

Item	Price	Rarity
Fish (Adakai)	+/-0%	Average
Brazier	+20%	Common
Fishing Kit	-20%	Common
Lanterns and Lantern Oil	+30%	Common
Spices (Sea Salt and Nori Mix)	-20%	Common
Traveling Cloak	-20%	Common

Availability and Price of Goods in the Fox Lands

Item	Price	Rarity
Axes, Masakari and Ono	+30%	Rare
Medicine Kit	-30%	Common
Mortar and Pestle	-30%	Common
Nagamaki	+20%	Average
Paper, Parchment, Scrolls	-10%	Average
Small Fox Painting or Sculpture	-50%	Common

Fox Clan Lands

Kitsune Mori and Fox Clan (now the Kitsune family of the Mantis) are two names, which with time, have so strongly become associated with each other that in the minds of some they are indistinguishable from one another. The Kitsune Mori and its surrounding areas are the Fox Clan's territory. The Fox Clan's lands are extremely fertile, but they are not exploited to their fullest due to the Fox Clan's refusal of cutting down trees from the Kitsune Mori to make room for cultivation; and woe to anyone lifting his axe against the venerable trees of the Kitsune Mori! There are also rumors about a network of caves and tunnels under the Kitsune Mori which the Fox samurai often employ for quick and safe travel as well as to avoid disturbing the forest. Still, the Fox Clan carefully makes the most of the Kitsune Mori in other ways, and produces enough resources to make it an attractive trading location for merchants.

Thanks to adequate temperate climate and water flowing from the Kitsune Mori, Fox lands produce enough rice to feed the Clan. Fox samurai often supplement their diet with fruits, nuts, edible seeds, and berries from the Kitsune Mori. Unlike other clans who have access to small game to hunt, the Fox samurai categorically refuse to hunt it in reverence of the Kitsune spirits of the woods. They do, however, hunt and eat fowl.

One would think that having such a large forest in their Clan's land, the Fox would produce a lot of lumber, but it is not so since they only harvest the lumber of dead trees or of trees that were fell down by storms. Still Fox lumber is highly prized among the many shugenja family of the Empire as the wood of the Kitsune Mori is said to possess some mystical quality not unlike the wood of Mori Isawa. Fruits, nuts, and berries picked from the Kitsune Mori are also sought out as delicacies among richer clans, though the Fox are careful not to over-harvest the bounty of their forest. Finally, Fox medical expertise is also highly sought after for the Fox know the medical properties of the thousands of plants that grow throughout Rokugan. Many settlements wish they could afford a permanent Fox Clan midwife, herbalist, or healer. Sadly, Fox Clan art is not in high demand outside of the Clan's territory. Fox samurai have always been fond of the nagamaki, a fondness which has only grown since the time of Kitsune Ryosei.



Hare Clan Lands

The Hare Clan resides in the plains west of Ryoko Owari Toshi and north of the Plain of Thunder near the border of the Shinomen Mori as well as on the Seven Day Battle Plain to the southwest of Scorpion territory and to the south of the Plain of Thunder. This odd arrangement of land is mostly due to the fact of the Emperor wanting the Plain of Thunder to remain unclaimed by any clan. The northern Hare lands have colder and longer winter than the southern Hare lands due to its higher elevation. The southern Hare lands receive most of the rainfalls in Hare territory and are by extension, the Hare's arable lands where most of their farmlands are located. Since the northern Hare lands are close to Ryoko Owari, it is not rare to see many merchants passing and stopping in Hare lands.

A lot of water flowing from the Plains of Thunders' frequent storms allows the plains of the Hare Clan to remain fertile, which in turn allows the Hare to produce enough rice to be self-sufficient. The Hare peasants are not as scared of the Shinomen Mori as the Falcon peasants and often collect fruits, nuts, berries, edible seeds, and spices from it as well as hunting its small game and fowl.

The Hare are known for their yearly athletics competition. In addition to the fame these competitions bring to the clan, the contests often attract young bushi from the Crab, Scorpion, and Lion clans, which generates a little income. Being so close to the Shinomen Mori, the Hare also harvest some lumber. Another marginal source of income for the Hare Clan is the Hare practice of confiscating the assets of any Bloodspeaker or Kolat they kill (especially their koku and other mundane—but valuable—items). This is done more out of pragmatism than actual greed: each resource taken from the enemies of the Empire is one less resource that can be used against the

Empire and the Hare in particular, and it will fund the Hare's war against their foes. Anything the Hare cannot confiscate is either destroyed or is sent to the appropriate authorities (Emerald Magistrates, Jade Magistrates, Kuni Witch Hunters, Asako Inquisitors, Unicorn Avengers, etc...) so they can adequately deal with it; in no way should the enemies of the Hare Clan and the Empire be allowed to regain any lost resource. The many merchants who stop in Hare

lands on their way to Ryoko Owari also brings precious koku to the Hare Clan's coffers and also supplies the Hare with the tools they need to fight their enemies and break their secret codes.

Availability and Price of Goods in the Hare Lands

Item	Price	Rarity
Kemari Ball	-20%	Common
Knives	+20%	Common
Sandals	-10%	Average
Spices	-20%	Average
Sumi-e Box	+30%	Average
Three Kami Sake	-10%	Rare

Mantis Clan Lands

The Mantis only claimed the Islands of Silk and Spice before they became a Great Clan. The hot and humid jungles of the islands are extremely favorable to agriculture, even if the space for farmland is limited. Being cut off from the mainland meant that merchants rarely came to the Mantis Isles, despite their wealth, which forced the Mantis to go to the mainland for trade.

The tides, frequent rainfall, and volcanic soil have made the Mantis Isles extremely fertile and the diversity of soil and elevation makes it possible to cultivate just about anything. Mantis diet is extremely varied, from fish, algae, crustacean, and shellfish, to rice, wheat, barley, soybean, sorghum, tea, and millet, to tropical fruits, nuts, berries, spices, seeds, fowl, and small game.

The Mantis have always being wealthy, even by minor clan standards. The Islands of Silk and Spices contain tons of resources, exotic wood, silk, spices, seafood, gold and diamond mines, etc... They also exploit the Coral Islands for timber, coral, and pearls. The Mantis are also accomplished smugglers who can get their hands on just about anything available in the Empire as well as outside of it. They also have been accused of piracy in the past, which many clans stated must have been the secret of the Mantis' great wealth despite its minor clan status. The true secret of their wealth is in fact the trade they conduct with merchants from the Ivory Kingdoms on the Coral Islands. In fact, they have a few gold and silver mines they keep secret and use exclusively for trade with the gaijin merchants for jewels, perfumes, spices, ivory, and gaijin knives and swords. Finally, Mantis expertise is highly sought after for shipbuilding and ship maintenance, especially Watanabe ships.

Availability and Price of Goods in the Mantis Lands

Item	Price	Rarity
Fishing Kit	-20%	Common
Gaijin Knives and Swords	-20%	Average
Ivory Statuettes (Gaijin)	+20%	Average
Jewelry	-20%	Average
Lucky Cricket	+/-0%	Common
Perfumes (Gaijin)	+20%	Average
Spices	-30%	Common

Monkey Clan Lands

The Scorpion territory given to the Monkey Clan by Toturi I is a small patch of arable lands in the southern Scorpion land near the Seikitsu Mountains. Their lands are rather flat but rise abruptly to the west, where lush forests can be found. This sharp elevation means that the western Monkey lands are among the first to see snow south of the Seikitsu Mountains, the first place usually being the Scorpion city of Shimomura which lies further west atop this elevation. The Monkey Clan is also lucky enough to be located near a major trade route, which leads to Shimomura, between the Scorpion and Crane. This means that Monkey can sometimes expect visits from Crane merchants.

Since Monkey lands are very fertile, the Monkey Clan produces a lot of rice as well as wheat and barley. Occasionally, samurai can supplement their diet with fruits, berries, nuts, and edible seeds and roots from their small forests. Monkey samurai rarely have to hunt the various small game and fowl from their forests as their lands already produce plentiful harvests. At times, Monkey samurai will purchase Scorpion delicacies as they are readily available.

The Monkey possess a few copper mines in the Seikitsu Mountains and cut wood from their western forests. The surplus produced by the Monkey clan is often traded to other minor clan for profit. This has caused some tensions recently with the ronin city of Koeru Mura with whom the Monkey Clan has entered in direct competition in the selling of foodstuff. The Monkey Clan has offered fealty to the ronin of Koeru Mura in order to end this conflict and out of respect for their founder's ronin roots, but so far the city has politely refused the offer. Still, the Monkey try to keep such competition to its strict minimum as much as possible.

Availability and Price of Goods in the Monkey Lands

Item	Price	Rarity
Courtier's Cap and Fan	+10%	Average
Dice and Cup	-40%	Common
Food and Sake	+/-0%	Common
Makeup and Perfume	+10%	Average
Masks	+20%	Rare
Wooden Tools or Items	-30%	Common

Oriole Clan Lands

The Oriole (formerly the Tsi ronin family) lands consist simply of East Hub Village.

The Hub Villages lands have always been extremely fertile, but with people constantly fleeing away from the cursed ruins of Otosan Uchi, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find manpower to tend to the fields and as such, the Oriole's supply of food is constantly diminishing... Their proximity to the shore also assures a supply of seafood, but not as much as the Oriole would have hoped for because even the fishermen are fleeing the ruins.

The Tsi's expertise in smithing has at least assured a secure source of income for the small clan as many are ready to brave the ruins of Otosan Uchi to come trade with them. The Oriole are currently considering opening negotiations with both the Tortoise and the Firefly. The Oriole would be ready to trade weapons and armors to both the Tortoise and Firefly for seafood and for patrols of their territory, respectively.

Availability and Price of Goods in the Oriole Lands

Item	Price	Rarity
Armor	-10%	Common
Blacksmith's Hammer	-50%	Common
Cloth, Silk Bolt	+20%	Rare
Knives and Swords	-30%	Common

Ox Clan Lands

The Ox have claimed the Dragon Heart Plain which was held by the Phoenix Clan and the sinister Snake Clan before that. This plain is in fact a high altitude barren valley surrounded on three sides by the Great Wall of the North. The ground is not fertile and is only slightly more suited to farming than the Suzume Hills of the Sparrow Clan. This high altitude coupled with the fact that the Dragon Heart Plain is located so far north make winters long and harsh. All of this coupled with the stigma of the Snake Clan that still permeates the area make sure that merchants usually give the Ox lands a wide berth.

Not much grows in Ox territory, what little grows usually serves to feed the Ox steeds, so the Ox Clan imports most of the food consumed by their samurai and peasants alike. They do manage to grow grain for their horses and some wheat.

The Ox's main export is their steeds, a mix of Rokugani pony and Unicorn steeds. The Ox are not as tightfisted with their horses as their Unicorn cousins and are willing to sell them for a good price. Of course, they keep the better quality steeds for themselves. Most of the trade done with the Ox Clan is conducted in either Yobanjin Mura or the Dragon city of Heibeisu, mainly for food but sometimes weapons and grain to feed their horses. With two important temples in Phoenix land bordering Ox territory (Seido Jurojin and Rehaide Sano Ki-Rin), the Ox can, when the weather permits, sometimes gain a few koku from pilgrims from the western part of the Empire on their way to these holy sites. The Ox make a point to stay clear of any former Snake holdings, even going as far as refusing to mine their few jade and iron mines so as not to tempt corruption, although an astute observer might wonder why the few installations near those closed mines are not as dilapidated as they should...

(Note: for the Availability and Prices Table, see after the Snake Clan section)

Snake Clan Lands

The Snake Clan occupied the lands now claimed by the Ox Clan and as such had pretty much the same

particularities. The main difference, of course, was the clan's focus. Snakes were shugenja who studied maho to find ways to better defeat it. As such, most of their imports were much different than those of the Ox Clan as they would mainly import arcane texts and studies, jade, and other trinkets made to fight back the darkness. Later, when their focus shifted to the practice of maho, the Snake Clan started producing their own instruments of torture so as to avoid alerting the rest of the Empire, thanks to their few iron mines. They kept importing mostly the same things so as to maintain their facade, but maho scrolls and components were smuggled in slightly larger quantities among other imports.

Availability and Price of Goods in the Ox/Snake Lands

Item	Price	Rarity
Books and Scrolls (Snake only)	+10%	Common
Jade	+10%	Average
Saddle, Tack and Bridle (Ox only)	-20%	Common
Steeds (Ox only)	+40%	Common
Whips, Small Knives (Snake only)	-20%	Average

Sparrow Clan Lands

A maze of barren rocky hills and muddy marshes filled with dangerous wildlife and plagued by a constant harsh, humid weather; these are what the Sparrow call home. The Suzume Hills lie southeast of the Lake of Cherry Blossom Snow and west of the sacrosanct Golden Sun Plain. Farmlands are few and far between and usually consist of a few plots of arable lands that can support two of three persons at most. There are few roads and few large settlements in Sparrow lands; in fact, Sparrow villages barely qualify as hamlets... Sadly, the poor Sparrows are of no interest to most merchants.

Sparrow samurai live and eat as peasants. They can grow millet, but most of their farms grow vegetable, mainly potatoes and cucumbers. The climate of the Suzume Hills is also beneficial to the culture of sorghum, and indeed a lot of it can be found among the native local flora. At times, they supplement their diets by hunting small games and fowls, but since there are a lot of large predatory animals that dwell in Sparrow lands, hunting can become a dangerous endeavor at times...

Sparrows produce very little. The humid weather of the Suzume Hills usually turns paper into wet mush within days and warps wood in only a few years. The only things Sparrows have in large supply are rocks and stones. It is considered among peasants that Sparrow farming tools—and consequently peasant weapons—are among the most durable in the Empire as they are built to withstand the harsh climate and till the rocky soil of the Suzume Hills. Despite their destitute situation, Sparrows enjoy art just as much as their Crane ancestors. Sadly paintings and poems don't last long in the Sparrow lands and an artist must often recreate his works at least twice a week. The only pieces of art that last are storytelling and stone sculpture. Any Sparrow lucky enough to be commissioned a piece of art in another clan's lands could potentially make a lot of money. Sparrows have

adopted the sling as their official ranged weapon which was introduced to them by a traveling Ide merchant a few centuries ago.

Availability and Price of Goods in the Sparrow Lands

Item	Price	Rarity
Books, Paper, and Parchment	+50%	Rare
Farming Tools	-20%	Average
Food/Traveler's Rations	+30%	Average
Peasant Weapons	-20%	Common
Shovel	-20%	Common
Slings	+/-0%	Common

Tortoise Clan Lands

Tortoise lands are very small, consisting only of a small peninsula just outside the ruins of Ootosan Uchi. Just like the old capital, the lands of the Tortoise enjoy clement weather year round but are also plagued with frequent earthquakes. The Tortoise peninsula is easily accessible by both land and sea, although since the destruction of Ootosan Uchi, all of these routes have somewhat fell into disuse...

The Tortoise lands are very small and most of their lands were already occupied by fortifications meant for the defense of Ootosan Uchi, so very little arable land were left for farming which pretty much limited the Tortoise to the odd personal garden growing vegetables. Luckily, being practically surrounded by the sea means easy access to seafood. In fact the village of Kasuga specializes in a variety of goods from the sea including kelp, shrimp, and clams. When Ootosan Uchi still stood, the Tortoise could easily get their food from the Imperial city proper or the Hub Villages. Now only the Hub Villages can provide the Tortoise with food, and with people fleeing the Hub Villages to get away from the tainted ruins of Ootosan Uchi, food is becoming scarcer every year...

This does not mean that the Tortoise do not prosper, this would be discounting the Tortoise's resourcefulness and diversity. For instance, they ferry people to and from the Phoenix lands and the northern Crane lands, although now their passengers are limited to those who are not afraid of the ruins of Ootosan Uchi, those who cannot afford a safer route, or those who have business at the ruins. The Tortoise often offer their skills in ship-building and repair (second only to the Mantis, of course) in exchange for money and favors. They used to operate a large marketplace in North Hub Village where buyers were often glad to pay inflated prices to be the first in town to own the rare trinkets and materials the Tortoise had on display. The Tortoise's main exports are pearls from the village of Kasuga, but their main resource remains smuggling. They may do it on a smaller scale than the Mantis, but in a more diverse way; broadswords, scimitars, bolas, spicy foreign delicacies, they sometimes even smuggle heimin and hinin who are looking for a better life out of the Empire and into Yobanjin lands. They can also count on Imperial support. Since the Toturi dynasty, they may no longer be the Emperor's Clan, but they still perform their duties and hence receive resources from the Imperial coffers in order to perform those duties. Finally,

they have an agreement with the Firefly Clan; the Firefly patrol part of the Tortoise lands in exchange for food. This in turn frees more Tortoise samurai for the Clan's smuggling operations...

Availability and Price of Goods in the Tortoise Lands

Item	Price	Rarity
Fishing Kit	-30%	Common
Foodstuff and Sake	+30%	Average
Gaijin goods	+30%	Common
Peasant Weapons	-30%	Common
Rope	-20%	Common
Spices	-30%	Common

Wasp Clan Lands

The Wasp Clan (now the Tsuruchi family of the Mantis Clan) originally had very little land to call their own. At the time of the Clan's founding, they had only the small valley containing Kyuden Ashinagabachi. But as the specter of the Clan Wars loomed on the horizon, the Wasp Clan quickly scrambled to acquire more lands and more resources in order to survive the inevitable conflict ahead. As a result, Wasp land grew rather haphazardly, twisting between Centipede, Crane, Fox, Hare, Scorpion, and unaligned lands. Diverse might be the only word appropriate to describe Wasp lands as they quickly go from lush, fertile plains to barren, rocky mountains.

The diversity of Wasp lands also allows for a varied food production, from the rice of their fertile plains, to the barley and millet produced in more hilly areas, to fish taken from Red Lake, to small games, fowls, fruits, nuts, spices, and berries from their few small forests.

This diversity is also apparent in the economics of the Clan. Originally, the sole source of revenue for the Clan was the Wasps' work as bounty hunters. At some point, Wasp bows and arrows were recognized as being the best in the Empire and demand soon began to grow, but of course, the Wasp made sure to keep the very best grade bows and arrows for themselves before selling the rest. Then there was the discovery of the Shaiga gold mines which the Wasp kept secret and mined lightly so that it would not arouse suspicions. Since the Wasp was rather a small clan population-wise, many ronin mercenaries were hired for the defense of the Clan and its stronghold. This also meant that food had to be purchased to feed those mercenaries which made the Wasp Clan a steady client of Koeru Mura.

Availability and Price of Goods in the Wasp Lands

Item	Price	Rarity
Bows and Arrows	+/-0%	Common
Bowyer's Kit	-40%	Common
Food/Traveler's Rations	+20%	Average
Katana and Wakizashi	+30%	Rare

Kalajel

❖ The Dojo ❖

Schools and Paths

Basic Schools

The Mongoose Clan

Note: This is an alternate timeline new Minor Clan with its associated school.

The Mongoose Clan was founded by a ronin named Noburo. In 1169, a group of samurai became yoriki to an Emerald Magistrate at Zakyo Toshi. While there they discovered that the city's Scorpion governor was quite corrupt. With the help of Noburo, then going by the name Vengeance, they brought down the corrupt government of the city leading to the murder of their boss. An Emerald Magistrate by the name of Akodo Meikuko joined them in the city and placed Noburo in the newly vacated governor's chair. After a year of hard fighting (and resisting many poisoning attempts) Noburo, the yoriki, and Kakita Noritoshi brought down Shosuro Jimen linking him to Zakyo Toshi's governor and the illegal business conducted there. As a result the clans united and Kakita Noritoshi became Emperor Noritoshi I. His first act as Emperor was to award Noburo his own family name, and to give him the right to start his own clan with the express purpose of keeping order in the area between Scorpion lands and the Shinomen Mori. Thus the previous ronin became Noburo Suzuki, and founded the Mongoose Clan.

Noburo Family Benefit: +1 Agility

NEW BASIC SCHOOL

Mongoose Bushi School [Bushi]

Benefit: +1 Agility

Honor: 2.0

Skills: Athletics, Defense, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, Medicine (Antidotes), Poison, Any 1 skill.

Outfit: Katana, wakizashi, bow and 20 arrows (any type), medicine pouch, kimono and sandals, traveling pack; 3 koku

RANK 1: THE WAY OF THE MONGOOSE

The Mongoose teach their bushi to never be where their opponents are striking, rather than reacting to the strike itself. When not wearing armor, you gain several abilities: you use your Agility instead of your Reflexes to calculate your TN to be Hit, and you also add your Water Ring to your TN to be Hit and to your damage rolls.

RANK 2: DART AND DODGE

Being lithe and agile as the Mongoose generally puts them in perfect position to make amazing maneuvers with their weapons. Your Called Shots cost 1 less Raise than normal (to a minimum of 1 Raise). When an opponent attacks you and misses, you gain a number of Free Raises equal to your School Rank on your next attack against this opponent. These Free Raises may only be used to increase the attack roll by +5 each.

RANK 3: RESIST AND RETALIATE

Due to their origins, the samurai of the Mongoose clan are born and bred to resist attempts at poisoning. As a result most will find it extremely difficult to dispatch them in this most nefarious manner. When rolling Stamina versus poison or illness, you roll (but not keep) additional dice equal to your School Rank. This ability stacks with Jurojin's Blessing. Finally, you add twice your Water Ring to your damage rolls and to your TN to be Hit when unarmored, replacing your bonus from Rank 1.

RANK 4: STRIKE OF THE MONGOOSE

Even a creature as peaceful as a Mongoose can be aroused to great fury. You may now make an additional attack per round.

RANK 5: MOVE AND MAUL

After years of training, the Mongoose have learned how to take best advantage of their natural born talents. When an opponent attacks you in melee and misses, once per round, you may immediately make a melee attack against that opponent, using Reflexes as the trait rather than Agility. However, you do not benefit from your Rank 2 technique for this attack. Finally, you now add three times your Water Ring to all damage rolls and to your TN to be Hit when unarmored, replacing your bonus from Rank 3.

Akodo Harubi

Schools of the Snake Clan

The following schools focus of the Snake Clan, a small clan that lasted only a short time but had lot of potential. Should you decide that some of its non-corrupted members have survived the destruction of the clan, or even that its destruction never happened, you will find below some new schools to use in your game.

The Chuda Chainfighter School

While the Snake Clan primarily consisted of shugenja, some samurai were not born with the ability to speak to the kami. Many were sent to the Shiba Bushi School, but one man, Chuda Masaki, left the Shiba after a disagreement with a high-ranking yojimbo. Cast out, Masaki developed his own unique style, adapted from his own observations of the behavior of his clan's namesake. Never particularly skilled with the traditional blade, Masaki favored an extended manrikikusari, with a chain nearly triple the usual length. In his lifetime, Chuda Masaki developed a small following of students, and his techniques were refined and taught to a select handful of students. The Chuda clan has all but disappeared within the Empire, but there are those who still practice Masaki's distinctive style. Since the Five Nights of Shame, the school no longer uses the disgraced name of the Snake Clan, but is known as the "chainfighter" school.

NEW BASIC SCHOOL

Chainfighter School [Bushi]

Benefit: +1 Agility

Honor: 2.0

Skills: Athletics, Chain Weapons (Snake Coil), Defense, Hunting, Kenjutsu, Meditation, Any 1 Skill

Outfit: Katana, wakizashi, snake coil, ashigaru armor, traveling clothes, kimono and sandals; 2 Koku

RANK 1: WAY OF THE SNAKE

In a minor clan with few soldiers, Masaki knew that victory is not gained only through brute force or blinding speed, but in waiting for your enemy to show weakness. When rolling for Tides of Battle during a skirmish, you add your Fire Ring to the rolled amount. Additionally, the Chuda learns to use his weapon to interfere with his enemy. While using a Chain Weapon, you cannot be flanked and add your Water Ring to your TN to be Hit.

NEW WEAPON

Sneak Coil [Chain Weapon]

The Snake Coil is simply a manrikikusari with a longer chain, stretching nearly 15 feet, with a weight at both ends. The user wraps the chain around his shoulders and arms, spinning it furiously through the air. They are not difficult to craft, but since the apparent demise of the Chuda School, there is little demand for this peculiar weapon.

DR: 2k1

Special Rules: The Snake Coil's length can be difficult for untrained users to manage, and novice students often wind up entangled in their own weapon. An attacker without the Snake Coil Emphasis must make two Raises on his Attack roll or be entangled in his own chain. When attacking with this weapon, you ignore your opponent's armor bonus to his TN to be Hit. The extra length of chain provides a better grip on an entangled opponent; when inflicting grappling damage, the Snake Coil's DR is 2k2.

Cost: 7 koku

RANK 2: PYTHON'S CRUSHING COILS

Masaki witnessed the massive constrictors of the jungle squeeze the life out of the strongest ox, and devised ways to employ the strong links of the Snake Coil. Many an unsuspecting opponent found himself at Masaki's mercy, bound by the iron length of the Chuda's weapon. Whenever you successfully enter into a grapple with an opponent after a successful Disarm or Knockdown with a Chain Weapon, you gain a bonus equal to twice your Earth Ring on the Contested Roll to control the grapple. Additionally, Masaki taught his students to use their opponent's strength to the Chuda's own advantage; against an opponent you have successfully grappled, you roll (but not keep) an additional number of dice for damage equal to half your opponent's Strength, rounded down. Finally, the chainfighter learns to root his own chi in the solid ground of Dragon Heart Plain; you may add your Earth Ring to all Attack rolls.

RANK 3: VIPER'S SHARP STRIKE

The snake waits patiently before striking, remaining so still it goes unnoticed by its prey. So long as you remain perfectly still (no movement; no physical actions; unspeaking), you roll (but not keep) additional dice equal to your School Rank on all Stealth rolls. Also, you may make an Additional attack per round. You may add twice your Water Ring to your TN to be Hit when wielding a Chain Weapon, replacing the bonus from the Rank 1 Technique.

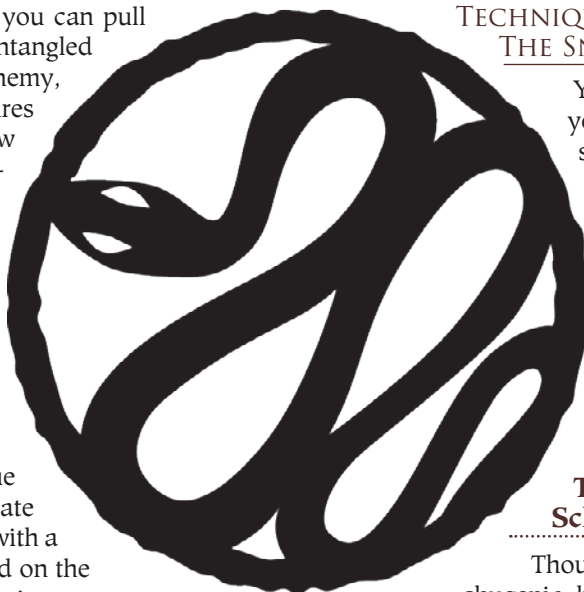
RANK 4: DANNOSHIN'S METHOD

Masaki's greatest student was his nephew Dannoshin, who many said was an even more skilled chainfighter than Masaki himself. Dannoshin's skill was so great that his Snake Coil chain seemed to move of its own accord, striking opponents from all sides while he parried their blows. When using a Chain Weapon in Full Defense, if your opponent makes a melee attack and misses you by 10 or more, and if you are not already grappling with someone, he might become entangled in your Chain. You immediately lose the TN to be Hit bonus provided by the Full Defense posture (though you remain in Full Defense until your next turn) and your opponent must immediately make a successful Contested Strength roll or become grappled and take normal Chain Weapon damage. The chainfighter's connection to the land deepens; you may add twice your Earth Ring to all Attack Rolls, replacing the bonus from the Rank 2 technique.

RANK 5: POWER OF 10,000

Few besides Masaki and Dannoshin could master this technique, which enabled a single chainfighter to stand against an entire legion. During the Five Nights of Shame, Chuda Ayate, the sensei of the Chuda Bushi dojo, fought alone against an entire squad of Shiba Elite Guardsmen; the Shiba attributed his abilities to the Shuten Doji's influence, but there was nothing supernatural about Ayate's technique. The fifth and final technique of the Chainfighter School teaches the chainfighter to use his enemies' attacks against each others. When facing multi-

ple opponents, once per round you can pull an opponent you previously entangled between yourself and another enemy, just before his strike; this requires a successful Contested Raw Strength roll against the entangled opponent, and you gain a bonus equal to twice your Earth Ring on this Contested Roll. If you succeed, the next attack directed at you instead hits your entangled opponent (there is no Attack roll in this case, the attack automatically hits and damage is rolled normally). This technique may also be used with inanimate objects, in which case it is done with a Raw Strength roll vs. a TN based on the size and weight of the object (for instance, a big book or a candelabra could be TN 10, a heavy wooden bench TN 20, or a large piece of furniture TN 30 or more; Gamemaster's discretion). Finally, at this level, the Chuda bushi moves with the hypnotic grace of a serpent; you may add three times your Water Ring to your TN to be Hit, replacing the bonus from the Rank 3 technique.



Hida Tango

TECHNIQUE: THE SNAKE SHEDS ITS SKINS

You gain a bonus equal to twice your Air Ring when casting any spell that is specifically designed to deceive others. When you cast a spell that damage a person or creature that you know has broken or is breaking Imperial law, or is Tainted, you gain a bonus equal to your Earth Ring on both the spell's casting roll and damage roll.

The Snake Clan Magistrate School

Though Isawa Chuda was a talented shugenja his descendants did not always develop his skill with the kami. Though they may not all have been able to speak with the kami they still had the desire to ferret out the enemies of the Emperor just like their founder did. Isawa Chuda's very own son, Yoharu, was the first of a line that couldn't practice magic but instead served as Imperial Magistrate. It was he who founded this school so the Snake could better serve the Empire.

The Snake Clan Shugenja School (Pure)

The Snake are the Emperor's serpent, creeping into the hidden places and striking down his enemies. Isawa Chuda has taught many things to his clan over the years, and one of his most important teachings is that you must get close to your enemy, infiltrate his organization, and map his weaknesses and strengths, for when it is time to strike you will strike as fast as the viper, so he will not know what hit him, but also you must encircle him and all of his wrongdoings and crush them like a constrictor snake.

NEW BASIC SCHOOL

Chuda Shugenja School [Shugenja]

Benefit: +1 Awareness

Honor: 2.0

Skills: Calligraphy, Lore: Maho, Medicine, Meditation, Spellcraft (Maho), Theology, Any One Lore Skill

Outfit: Wakizashi, tanto, kimono and sandals, scroll satchel, imperial seal, traveling pack; 2 Koku

Note: Chuda Shugenja do not lose Honor for researching maho so long as it is with the intent of using that knowledge for fighting maho-tsukai, and not performing blood magic. They do lose Honor normally if and when they cast maho spells.

Affinity/Deficiency: Chuda Shugenja have an Affinity for Air, and a Deficiency for Water.

Spells: Sense, Commune, Summon, 3 Air spells, 2 Earth spells, and 1 Fire spell.

NEW BASIC SCHOOL Chuda Magistrate School [Bushi]

Benefit: +1 Perception

Honor: 2.0

Skills: Anatomy (Torture), Athletics, Defense, Hunting, Investigation, Kenjutsu, Lore: Maho

Note: Chuda Magistrates do not lose Honor for researching maho so long as it is with the intent of using that knowledge for fighting maho-tsukai, and not performing blood magic. They do lose Honor normally if and when they cast maho spells.

Outfit: Katana, wakizashi, light armor, jitte, kimono and sandals, imperial seal, traveling pack; 2 koku

RANK 1: THE CHARM OF THE SNAKE

The Snake have learned over the years that when someone has broken the law and is captured, that the guilt of his crime will eat away at their resolve and he will feel compelled to confess his wrongdoings to the magistrate, but the Snake have also developed techniques to speed up the process. You do not lose Honor for using torture, so long as it is psychological and not physical in nature. You also may add your Water Ring to your TN to be Hit and to the TN of hostile spells targeting you.

RANK 2: THE SNAKE'S RATTLE

Chuda Yoharu did not have his father's talent with the kami, but what he was skilled at finding what was hidden. When you spend a Void Point on a school skill to gain +1k1, you roll (but do not keep) an extra number of dice equal to half your Perception, rounded down. You may add your Air Ring to the total of your Attack and Investigation rolls.

RANK 3: THE SCALES OF THE SNAKE

You can now make one additional attack per round. You may now add twice your Water Ring to your TN to be Hit and to the TN of hostile spells targeting you (this replaces your bonus from Rank 1).

RANK 4: COILED AND READY

When you spend a Void Point on a school skill to gain +1k1, you now roll (but do not keep) extra dice equal to your Perception. You also add twice your Air Ring to your Attack and Investigation rolls total. These benefits replace your bonuses from Rank 2.

RANK 5: THE SNAKE'S FANGS

Whenever you are torturing or interrogating a suspect, any Raises you make against that person has its effects doubled. So if you Raise to extract one piece of information, you now acquire two pieces of information. You may now add triple your Water Ring to your TN to be Hit and to the TN of hostile spells targeting you (this replaces your bonus from Rank 3).

Fuzake Shugenja (Monkey Clan)

The founding of the Fuzake family was unique. Though the Fuzake are now a full-fledged family of the Monkey clan, their status in the past was always in question. Yasuki Garou was given the family name of Fuzake thanks to the sponsorship of the Doji family, to reward him for his efforts of tending to the wounded and trying to bring humor to Rokugan during the Clan Wars.

This was done in 1129, the same year that Toku was given the title of Captain of the Imperial Guard, and became the champion of his own Minor Clan. The newly named Fuzake Garou was the daimyo of a clanless family of one, and so he went to his long time companion Toku and offered to swear fealty to the Monkey Clan. Toku accepted and thus the first family of the clan was created. It was only after Toku's death in 1164 that the Monkey Clan started using Toku as a formal family name for the ruling family of the clan.

Since its founding the Fuzake family has diligently served the Monkey Clan. The family has, however, had setbacks in founding a school of its own. The first would be that its founder Fuzake Garou fell at the Battle of Oblivion's Gate four years after the establishment of the family. The second setback is the relative small size of the family and its resources. Over the years the small but determined family has forged a school that embodies the Monkey Clan's mentality of stalwart resilience.

NEW BASIC SCHOOL

Fuzake Shugenja School [Shugenja]

Benefit: +1 Willpower

Honor: 2.5

Skills: Calligraphy, Lore: History, Medicine, Meditation, Spellcraft, Theology, Any one skill

Outfit: Wakizashi, Tanto, Kimono, Sandals, Scroll Satchel, Imperial Seal, Traveling Pack, 4 koku

Affinity/Deficiency: Affinity Earth, Deficiency Air

Spells: Sense, Commune, Summon, Counterspell, 3 Earth, 2 Water, 1 Fire

TECHNIQUE: INDOMITABLE WILL

You gain a Free Raise on any spell that aides or hinders another person or target. Spells that damage another person or target do not benefit from this technique.

Wargames

Advanced Schools

Ichiro Mountain Legion (Badger Clan)

The attack of Hideo no Oni left the Badger broken. It took them a few decades to recover from such a catastrophe. Any other Clan would have reconsidered their lack of shugenja, but since Hideo no Oni was summoned by a shugenja, it only served to strengthen the already stubborn Badgers' dislike of the "holy men."

This did, however, make the Badger realize that they had a weak spot that they desperately needed to eliminate; they had no ways of dealing against attacks of magical or supernatural nature. Their solution was to turn toward their roots; the Crab Clan. The Crab had learned ways to deal with both oni and maho-tsukai for over a millenium now. Some of the tougher and more resilient Badgers decided to offer their mercenary services to the Crab in the hopes of learning how to fight such foul things. Nearly twenty years later, and after almost half of them died on the Wall or in the Shadowlands, they came back to the Badger's dojo with new techniques they developed in the Crab lands.

NEW ADVANCED SCHOOL

Ichiro Mountain Legion [Bushu]

Requirements

Rings/Traits: Strength 6, Earth 4.

Skills/Emphases: Defense 4, Hunting (Mountaineer) 4, Kenjutsu (No-Dachi) or Heavy Weapons (Any one Emphasis) 5.

Advantage: Strength of the Earth or Magic Resistance.

Other: The Advantage requirement can be waived by increasing all the skills requirements by 1.

RANK 1: THE FURY OF THE MOUNTAIN

It has long been believed among the Badger that the larger the weapon, the better. You now keep an additional die on all damage rolls. If wielding a heavy weapon or a no-dachi, you keep two additional die instead. You may also decrease your opponent's Carapace by half your Strength (rounded down) regardless of the weapon wielded.



RANK 2: BEND THE KAMI

The Badger's refusal of magic is such that the kami are now loathe to affect him whether for good or for ill. You add twice your Insight Rank to the TN of any spells cast on you. This effect stacks with the Magic Resistance advantage.

RANK 3: FURY OF THE BADGER

The Badger's anger at the near extinction of their clan has galvanized the Badger and turned them into formidable opponents. To the Badger it is clear that if they must fall again one day, they will bring as many of their enemies as possible with them in death. You can enter a state of rage once per day that lasts for a number of rounds equal to your Earth Ring +3. During this rage you ignore all Wounds Penalties except "Down" and "Out", and keep one more damage die, which stacks with your Rank 1 Technique. When your rage ends, your Earth Ring, as well as its associated Traits, are considered 1 less for the same amount of time. This affects your Wounds, which will have to be recalculated (it is possible you could die at that point).

Usagi Battle-Runner (Hare Clan)

The Hare are renowned for two things: their ability to uncover secrets, and their ability to run fast, very fast... The Battle-Runners, mostly of the Usagi family, specialize in that second aptitude and make use of their speed to become darting blurs on the battlefield, so that their opponents can not land a single blow.

NEW ADVANCED SCHOOL

Usagi Battle-Runner [Bushi]

Requirements

Rings/Traits: Agility 5, Reflexes 4.

Skills/Emphases: Athletics (Climbing, Running, Swimming) 6, Defense 4.

Advantage: Daredevil or 3 points of Luck.

Other: Must have performed an outstanding feat of athleticism (outrun a horse, climbed a tall mountain with nothing but your bare hands, etc.). The Advantage requirement can be waived by increasing all the Traits requirements by 1.

RANK 1: CHASING TWO HARES

There is a saying among the Lion about the lion which chased after two hares and ended up catching neither. That is what the Usagi Battle-Runner tries to exemplify; those two hares that the lion simply couldn't catch. You may add your Athletics skill rank to your TN to be Hit at all times, if you also possess the Rank 1 Usagi Bushi technique, this benefit is doubled while on Full Defense. Also, when taking the Full Defense posture, you may choose to roll your Athletics skill instead of Defense skill as long as you have enough room to maneuver.

RANK 2: THE UNEXPECTED STRIKE

At this rank, the Battle-Runner is so attuned with his body that every position in which he finds himself in, no matter how precarious, feels comfortable and natural to him. You no longer suffer from any penalty from lower ground, being prone, or uneven terrain and opponents no longer gain flanking or higher ground bonus against you. You can stand up from prone as a simple action, and if you go into the Full Attack posture while getting up, you only need to Raise once in order to attack in the same round.

RANK 3: BOUNDS AND LEAPS

Your Emphases bonuses to Athletics rolls are now doubled. You also gain 3 extra dice per day to be used on any Athletics roll as you see fit. These extra dice do not carry over to the next day if they are not used, but are replenished at sunrise every day. Finally, once per roll, your 9's explode as well as your 10's on any Athletics rolls you make, even when using it for Full Defense as per your Rank 1 Technique.

Kalajel

Paths

Hare Shadowbane (Hare Clan)

The Hare have extensive knowledge of their preys, though they carefully hide its exact extent from their enemies to keep the small advantage they have against them. Knowledge by itself is good, but the Shadowbane know exactly how to use it at maximum efficiency against their enemies, turning their weaknesses against them.

NEW PATH

Hare Shadowbane [Bushi]

Technique rank: 2

Path of Entry: Usagi Bushi 1, Ujina Skirmisher 1, or Woodland Tracker 1

Path of Egress: Usagi Bushi 2 if you already have this school at rank 1, or Usagi Bushi 1 otherwise.

TECHNIQUE: KNOW THE PREY

Whenever you spend a Void Point on a Hunting (Tracking) or Investigation Skill roll to gain +1k1, you gain +Xk1 instead, where X is your Insight Rank. All Low Skills are considered Bugei Skills for you, as long as you use them directly in the pursuit of justice and to hunt down the enemies of the Empire. Finally, if you have successfully identified your opponent's nature or allegiance, you gain a bonus to the total of your Attack Roll equal to your rank in the relevant Lore Skill against the corresponding opponent (for example, if you have previously determined your opponent is Kolat, you may add your rank in the Lore: Kolat Skill to the total of the Attack Roll). In the case of Shadowlands creatures, the relevant Lore: Shadowlands Emphasis (Oni, Undead, Bakemono, etc.) might be required by the Gamemaster for this bonus to apply. If multiple Lore Skills apply, use only the highest bonus you would receive from any one of them (this includes any bonuses you might receive from a Know the School Skill, which are also Lore skills taken into account by this technique), or the one the Gamemaster deems more relevant (Gamemaster's discretion).

Heichi Impaler (Boar Clan)

The elite among the Boar's troops were called impalers; warriors trained to use the mai chong (as well as other polearms) with deadly efficiency. They were renowned as fearful fighters and there was a saying that anyone fighting them would either die in battle or later from the terrible wounds the impalers were known to inflict on their opponents.

NEW PATH

Heichi Impaler [Bushi]

Technique Rank: 4

Path of Entry: Heichi Bushi 3

Path of Egress: Heichi Bushi 4

TECHNIQUE: THE MAD BOAR'S DEADLY TUSKS

The Boar learned to thrust and twist his weapon in his opponent's flesh in order to inflict vicious wounds. When successfully attacking with a polearm, you may spend two Void Points to have your attack injure the opponent so that his wound will bleed. The opponent will lose a number of Wounds equal to your Polearms skill + your Fire Ring - the target's Earth Ring (minimum 1) for a number of rounds equal to your Strength. Bleeding damage will start at the beginning of your next turn. Also, once per round, immediately after you bring an opponent to the Out Wound level (or lower) with one of your attacks (from actual rolled damage, not from bleeding), you gain an extra attack for the round that must be directed at the same opponent.



Hotaru Night Watchman (Firefly Clan)

While the Hotaru family is tiny even by Minor Clan standards, they excel at their duty. The Night Watchmen are the elite guardsmen who patrol key areas along the coast.

NEW PATH

Hotaru Night Watchman [Bushi]

Technique Rank: 2

Path of Entry: Hotaru Bushi 1

Path of Egress: Hotaru Bushi 2

TECHNIQUE: SHINE THE LIGHT

Even in the blackest night, it is nearly impossible to evade the careful eye of the Night Watchman. Anyone attempting to use the Stealth skill on you must make a number of Raises equal to half your Hotaru Bushi School Rank (rounded up). The Night Watchman has also learned how to best use the shadows to his own advantage. When fighting in dim light, you suffer no penalties to your melee attacks; any penalties from fighting in total darkness are reduced by 5. This Path counts as an additional rank in the Hotaru Bushi School.

Ichiro Defender (Badger Clan)

The Badger have always prided themselves as being a self-sufficient Clan. Early in their history, as their intolerance toward shugenja was developing, they realized that the lack of magical healing and protection could eventually be their undoing. They started working on a technique that allowed their warriors to roll with the enemies blow to lessen any wounds they would receive. This technique, coupled with the Badger's legendary tenacity, made for terrifying warriors, capable of enduring the

worst their opponent could dish out and still continue fighting effectively.

In fact, during Hideo no Oni's rampage in Badger lands, Ichiro Defenders were often able to fight the creature and it's spawns to a standstill, for a few moments at least. The sacrifice of those brave individuals may have very well be the only reason the Badger weren't completely destroyed during those dark times.

NEW PATH

Ichiro Defender [Bushì]

Technique Rank: 4

Path of Entry: Ichiro Bushi 3

Path of Egress: Ichiro Bushi 4

TECHNIQUE: THE STRENGTH OF THE MOUNTAIN

With a mix of rolling techniques, body control, and a lot of sheer trademark Badger stubbornness, the Badger have learned to lessen the blows of their opponents and speed their own recovery. You multiply your Earth by 3 to calculate your Wound Levels (by 6 for the Out Wound Level). Also, when spending a Void Point to reduce damage, you may add your lowest Ring to the amount of damage ignored. Finally, each day, after a good night's rest, you heal an additional amount of Wounds equal to your Stamina.

Ichiro Javelinier (Badger Clan)

Since the climate of the Badger lands is unkind to bowstrings, the nage-yari has become the de facto Badger's official ranged weapon. It is only natural now that individuals have dedicated themselves in mastering this weapon. Of course, other individuals have adopted some other throwing weapon but have also dedicated themselves to the mastery of those weapons in a similar manner. Regardless of the weapon used, these individuals are referred to as javelinier.

NEW PATH

Ichiro Javelinier [Bushì]

Technique Rank: 2

Path of Entry: Ichiro Bushi 1

Path of Egress: Ichiro Bushi 2

TECHNIQUE: WINDS OF THE MOUNTAINS

Badger have adopted a style of ranged combat which reflects their melee combat philosophy: brute strength is good, especially in large amount. You may add your Insight Rank x 10' to the range of any throwing weapon you use. You may also substitute your Strength for your Agility when attacking with a throwing weapon.

Kasuga Smuggler (Tortoise Clan)

The Tortoise have a bad reputation in the Empire, and the Kasuga Smugglers do nothing to improve the situation. Sneaky and resourceful, they use methods that would seem distasteful even to most Yasuki merchants. Fortunately for the small clan, the Smugglers also know to be very inconspicuous.

NEW PATH

Kasuga Smuggler [Courtier]

Technique Rank: 2

Path of Entry: Kasuga Courtier 1

Path of Egress: Kasuga Courtier 2

Other Requirements: Crafty

TECHNIQUE: SECRET GAINS

Whenever you make a Commerce, Deceit, Stealth or Underworld skill roll, you roll (but do not keep) an additional number of dice equal to half your Awareness, rounded down.

Kitsune Shinrinkei (Fox Clan)

Ever since their relocation near Kitsune Mori by the Emperor many centuries ago, the Fox Clan has taken great care to live in harmony with the forest. Many clansmen took some time from their regular studies to learn the skills necessary to survive in the forest. They became known as shinrinkei (or "rangers") and they eventually consolidated their understanding of the forest into formal teachings.

NEW PATH

Kitsune Shinrinkei [Special]

Technique Rank: 2

Path of Entry: Any Fox School or Ronin School 1

Path of Egress: Re-enter same School at next Rank



TECHNIQUE: THE FOREST SPEAKS TO ME

To the shinrinkei, living and moving in the forest is as natural as breathing. Any Raises made (including Free Raises) and Void Points spent on any Hunting, Stealth, and Animal Handling rolls have their effect doubled while in a forested area. You also gain the advantage Way of the Land (Forests of Rokugan) for free.

Koshei Yojimbo (Dragonfly Clan)

The youngest vassal family of the Dragonfly Clan, the Koshei family is descended from Toturi Koshei, formerly Akodo Koshei. Koshei participated in the decimation of the Dragonfly Clan when he was still serving under Akodo Ijiasu, a deed that haunted him for many years. At his ancestors' command, he sought out Toturi Sezaru to swear fealty to him. Sezaru accepted his oath. After Sezaru rebuilt Kyuden Tonbo, he ordered Koshei to remain at the castle to ensure that his interests are represented and protected. Forgiven by the Dragonfly, Koshei could finally assuage his guilt. Toturi Koshei later married a woman of the Tonbo family, and while he has not sworn fealty to the Dragonfly, nor given up his Toturi name, his wife has not taken his name and their children have been granted the Koshei name and the status of a Vassal Family, to honor their father's redemption.

Most of the children of Toturi Koshei have been sent to the Phoenix for training, and after returning and training with their father, they have slowly developed a style unique to the family. Though the Tonbo are mainly a shugenja family with strong diplomatic roots, they have recognized that a force of yojimbo is required to keep their interests safe. In pursuit of this, they have put aside funds to see that the Koshei vassal family can continue training in their unique style.

NEW PATH

Koshei Yojimbo [Bushi]

Technique Rank: 3

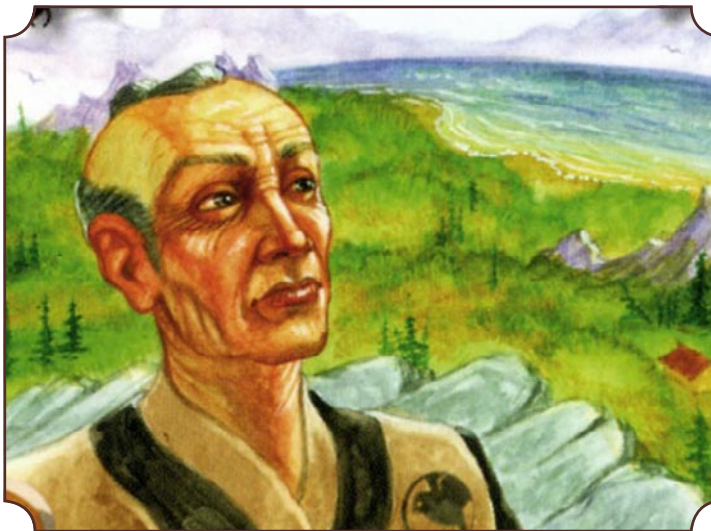
Path of Entry: Shiba Yojimbo 2

Path of Egress: Shiba Yojimbo 3

Other Requirements: Kharmic Tie

TECHNIQUE: DRAGONFLY'S STRIKE

This technique can only be used with someone you have the Kharmic Tie advantage with. When using the Kharmic Tie advantage, your bonuses from the advantage are doubled. You may also use the Kharmic Tie advantage twice as many times per game session. You also gain a bonus to your TN to be Hit equal to twice the honor of the person you have Kharmic Tie with. For example, if you have one point of the Kharmic Tie advantage, when fighting for or protecting the person you have the advantage with, your may gain +2k0 on a roll instead of +1k0. If the person you have a Kharmic Tie with has an Honor of 2, you would also receive a +4 bonus to your TN to be Hit while defending that person.



*Suzume Farmer-Warrior
(Sparrow Clan)*

The Sparrow Clan is a poor clan; their samurai must work in the fields to help their peasants produce enough food so the clan will not starve. The average Sparrow samurai is poor indeed compared to nobles from other clans. Most Sparrow samurai must often make due with sub-par equipment because of their poverty and sometimes, a bushi's family is so kokules that they can't even afford to send him study at the Suzume dojo... at least for a while.

NEW PATH

Suzume Farmer-Warrior [Bushi]

Technique Rank: 1

Path of Entry: None, this is an entry level Path.

Path of Egress: Suzume Bushi 1 or Ronin Bushi 1.

Benefit: +1 Stamina

Honor: 2.5

Skills: Animal Handling, Craft: Farming, Kenjutsu, Lore: History, Storytelling, any two High or Merchant skills.

Outfit: katana, wakizashi, 2 peasant weapons or staves, well-worn kimono, straw hat, sandals, traveling pack, 3 bu.

TECHNIQUE: BROTHERS IN THE FIELD

The Sparrow samurai often work alongside their heimin in the fields and thus benefit from close bonds between samurai and heimin. You gain the advantage Daikoku's Blessing for free and the bonus it grants to social rolls with heimin is doubled when in Sparrow lands. You may also add your Earth Ring on any Kenjutsu, Peasant Weapons, Staves, Animal Handling, and Craft skill rolls.

Suzume House Guard (Sparrow Clan)

Patient, honorable and strong when faced with hardship, the Suzume House Guards are the embodiment of the Sparrow Clan's most cherished ideals.

NEW PATH

Suzume House Guard [Bush]**Technique Rank:** 2**Path of Entry:** Suzume Bushi 1**Path of Egress:** Suzume Bushi 2**TECHNIQUE:** FINDING WEAKNESS
IN STRENGTH

The Sparrow have always been known for their patience and keen observations, even in the midst of battle. Whenever an opponent uses the Full Attack posture against you, you gain an additional Free Raise to use against that opponent. You also add your Honor Rank to your attack rolls (this bonus will stack with the one from the Rank 2 technique of the Suzume Bushi School).

Tonbo Spearman (Dragonfly Clan)

The Dragonfly Clan is made of pacifists, for the most part. Even when faced with the destruction of their clan at the hands of the Lion, the stoic shugenja of the Dragonfly accepted their fate or fled to avoid violence. Now that the Dragonfly is rebuilt, a few men of the younger generation question this attitude. They have developed fighting techniques specific to their unique ability to fly, and they are ready to defend their home against anyone who would decide to attack them.

NEW PATH

Tonbo Spearman [Shugenja]**Technique Rank:** 3**Path of Entry:** Tonbo Shugenja 2**Path of Egress:** Tonbo Shugenja 3**Requirements:** Spears 3, Athletics 3**TECHNIQUE:** STRIKE FROM THE SKIES

The Tonbo Spearman are trained to fight while flying. When flying and attacking a target on the ground, the Tonbo Spearman gains a Free Raise on his Attack rolls. Intense training in mid-air maneuvering makes the Spearman a difficult target, and he may add his ranks in Athletics to his TN to be Hit while airborne. The number of minutes a Tonbo Spearman may remain airborne is increased by his Air ring. When flying in the Full Attack posture, you may move up to 60' per round in any direction (instead of the normal 30').

***Toritaka Spirit-Hunter
(Falcon Clan)***

The Falcon have always tried to respect and possibly help any spirit they encounter, but some spirits are malicious and dangerous creatures who do not care nor want the Toritaka's help and respect. The Toritaka have then little choice but combat and destroy such creatures. The Toritaka Spirit Hunters are a specialized unit of bushi created for the express purpose of dealing with the more troublesome spirits.

NEW PATH

Toritaka Spirit-Hunter [Bush]**Technique Rank:** 3**Path of Entry:** Toritaka Bushi 2**Path of Egress:** Toritaka Bushi 3**TECHNIQUE:** HAYABUSA'S LESSON

When fighting a spirit, or someone possessed by a spirit, you can make one extra attack per round against that opponent. Also, you gain a number of extra dice (rolled, but not kept) equal to your Insight Rank on any rolls made to resist the influence of a spirit (such as Fear, possession, Taint, etc...). For the purpose of this technique a spirit is defined as any creature not native of Ningen-do (oni, gaki, hengeyokai) or anyone with the advantage or disadvantage Spirit of... (See *Creatures of Rokugan Third Edition*, p.14-15).

Usagi Elite Guard (Hare Clan)

The Hare Clan have existed for only 400 years, but since their creation they have done much to help the empire. They have helped take down Iuchiban at the Battle of Sleeping River, defeated countless bandits, bloodspeakers and Kolat cells across the empire that have threatened peasants and samurai alike. But their history has not always been one of victory. Due to Kolat manipulations and Scorpion interferences, the Hare Clan was disbanded. It is only through the heroic efforts of Usagi Ozaki and his companions, that two years later the Hare Clan's reputation was cleansed and the clan reinstated by Imperial decree.

Usagi Ozaki has always known that something similar could happen again, so after successfully rebuilding the dojo and finding sensei who could teach the techniques of the Ancestral School of the Hare, he decided to expand upon it, reinforcing its strengths and minimizing its weaknesses for those students skilled and trusted enough to learn this new technique.

NEW PATH

Usagi Elite Guard [Bush]**Technique Rank:** 4**Path of Entry:** Usagi Bushi 3**Path of Egress:** Usagi Bushi 4**TECHNIQUE:** SWIFT AS THE HARE

The Hare have learned over the years that they do not have the numbers to overwhelm their foes, and so have continued to train in their unorthodox style of fighting that few know how to counter. They use their bewildering techniques as an offensive tool unto itself. This Path is considered an additional rank in the Usagi Bushi School for the purposes of all Usagi Bushi techniques and this Path. You may now add your Athletics skill and your School Rank to your TN to be Hit at all time, replacing the benefit of the Usagi Bushi School Rank 1 technique.

Wargames, Kalajel, Hida Tango & Mike Brodu

Musha Shugyo #1

Path Contest Winners

The goal of the contest was to design a path that created a bridge between a Minor and a Great Clan, or between two Minor Clans. Despite this twisted requirement, we received some very cool ideas. Below are the 3 winning paths, followed by 2 other entries that we liked very much. Thanks to all the participants; it was fun and we hope you will be back for this issue's NPC+CFS contest (see p.107).

Winners

Ox Light Cavalry [Bushī]

BY MICHAL "USZATY" CENKOWSKI

Shinjo Morito is a cunning man. When the time had come to ride to the Hidden Temple of the Kolat and guard it, he took his men and led them from the Unicorn lands to the unexpected formation of the Ox Clan. He is a good leader, a brave warrior who developed his unique kenjutsu school based on the training he has taken among Shinjo family. But Morito is not a fool. He knows that there is still much to learn from the family he was born in. After all Shinjo were among the most infiltrated group by Kolat agents. Lady Shinjo purged the family and now remaining samurai try to rebuild their reputation, but there might still be hidden followers among their ranks. Yet it was not very difficult for Morito to keep good relations with his former family. Weakened, the Shinjo gladly accepted friendship from one of the strongest Minor Clans in Rokugan. It is a perfect opportunity for high ranking Ox bushi to train once again with the Unicorn. What is more, the Ox Clan needs a strong ally in case of a Dragon or the Lion Clan aggression. The Khan seems perfect for that.

Samurai from both Clans shared their experience to combine strength and hardiness of the Ox with speed and mobility of the Unicorn. Newly trained bushi formed new light cavalry units to complement formidable Ox Clan forces. They specialize in quick raids, flanking enemy units and horse archery.



Technique Rank: 4

Path of Entry: Ox Bushi 3

Path of Egress: Shinjo Bushi 1, Shinjo Scout 1 or Ox Bushi 4

TECHNIQUE: CHARGE OF THE MOUNTAINS

While mounted you add double your Insight rank to your Initiative total and gain +1k0 on all Weapon Skill rolls. If you have a higher Initiative than your opponent, then you gain +1k1 instead. Your horse's Water Ring is considered 1 higher for the purpose of determining its movement.

Hare Vigilante [Bushī]

BY MICHAL "USZATY" CENKOWSKI

Widely known is the friendship between the Lion and the Hare Clans. After its dissolution and reestablishment, the Hare Clan tried to rebuild good relations with the dominant military power in Rokugan. The Hare Clan position benefits greatly from closer relations with the Lion, while the latter gains much knowledge about the Kolat, the Bloodspeakers and also a helping hand to improve relations with other Minor Clans.

The path of the Hare Vigilante is pretty exclusive. Only some of the best Hare fighters are able to impress Matsu sensei enough to obtain permission to learn the technique and later train in the Matsu Berserker School. Specific fighting style was developed by both Lion and

Hare bushi during one of the yearly athletics competition at Shiro Usagi. The technique was named after one of the chapters from Akodo's Leadership which seems to have a great influence on Vigilante's swordsmanship.

Technique Rank: 4

Path of Entry: Usagi Bushi 3

Path of Egress: Matsu Berserker 1

TECHNIQUE: STRIKE HARD AND QUICK

While you are on Full Attack posture you may retain your TN to be Hit bonus from your Defense skill and your opponents gain one less Free Raise against you. When using the Usagi Bushi rank 1 technique, Leap of the Hare, you may now add double your Athletics skill to your attack rolls.

Fox Spearman [Bushī]

BY DANIEL "DBOHR" BEZERRA

One of the oldest Minor Clans, the Fox has always been pacific. Their history is rife with conflict, however, and after their re-location to the Kitsune Forest they had to occasionally guard their borders against conflicts from the three neighboring Great Clans and incursions from the Hare. Though they lacked the resources to maintain a formal bushi dojo, their spearmen were always noted for their prowess. During the Clan Wars, the Fox, the Sparrow and the Wasp Clans formed the Three Man Alliance and it was not uncommon for Kitsune bushi to train alongside the Suzume and Tsuruchi. Even now that the Tsuruchi and the Kitsune are part of the Mantis Clan, the cooperation with the Suzume is not forgotten. It remains to be seen if the Fox Spearmen will bloom into a full-fledged bushi school.

Technique Rank: 1

Path of Entry: None. This is an entry-level path.

Path of Egress: Any Ronin Bushi School at Rank 1, Suzume bushi 1

Benefit: +1 Agility

Honor: 2.0

Skills: Athletics, Defense, Hunting, Medicine, Kenjutsu, Spears (any one Emphasis), any one High or Bugei Skill.

Outfit: Any one spear, katana, wakizashi, light armor; kimono and sandals, traveling pack, 2 koku.

TECHNIQUE: QUICK AS A DART

The Fox know they cannot match the sheer power of the Great Clan armies, so they must defend their homeland with cunning and speed. You ignore the standard damage penalties of spear-class weapons. You also gain a bonus to Initiative rolls equal to double your Spears Skill ranks when wielding any kind of spear.

Honorable Mention

Ichiro Vanguard [Bushī]

BY BJORN "HIDA AKIRA"

Much as the ancestral duty of the Badger Clan—guarding Rokugan against an attack from the north—required them to be the first line of defense, the recent treaty between the Badger and their ancient cousins the Crab resulted in a number of Badger samurai standing on the Wall against the minions of Fu Leng. Their strength impressed the Crab enough to garner several of them invitations to study with the Hida.

Technique Rank: 4

Path of Entry: Ichiro Bushi 3

Path of Egress: Hida Bushi 1

TECHNIQUE: BROTHERS OF THE MOUNTAINS

The Ichiro have learned that raw ability to crush one's enemies is not always enough—one must withstand their attacks as well, and the Crab are the perfect teachers for these lessons. Void points spent to reduce damage prevent 15 Wounds rather than the usual 10. You also negate Wound penalties and Armor penalties by an amount equal to your Strength. Finally, you may add your Water Ring to your TN to be Hit.

Kasuga Ruins Stalker [Bushī]

BY MIKEL BUSCH

The Tortoise clan took it upon themselves to police the ruins of Otsan Uchi against the further proliferation of the Shadowlands into the once Sacred City. The Crab, as pragmatic as they are, agreed to train a group of bushi for the sole purpose of scouting, infiltrating, and trapping the ruins.

Technique Rank: 4

Path of Entry: Kasuga Bushi 3

Path of Egress: Hiruma Scout 1

TECHNIQUE: VIGILANT WATCH

The Ruins Stalker's sole purpose is to help maintain a constant state of readiness for the Tortoise and those who help to patrol the Ruins of Otsan Uchi, often maintaining watch in their assigned sector for days. The Stalker may maintain a normal wakeful state, without food, water, or other comforts, for a number of days equal to their Insight Rank. Furthermore, they gain a free raise on any roll to gain and/or maintain concealment from any threat, as well as detecting a threat.

Expanded Skills

Many skills from the first and second editions never made it as skills and/or emphases into the new Third Edition. Similarly, many precisions and alternate or optional rules were never covered. This article, in the direct continuation, of the one in *Musha Shugyo* #1, proposes third edition rules for these options, as well as introduces a few new ones. These rules do not supersede any other from the Third Edition line, they supplement them.

HIGH SKILL Artisan Skills

New skill: Artisan: Fox Clan Art

The Fox are not renowned for their art, although they are dedicated to its pursuit. Rather than conform to the interest of the Imperial Court in painting and great statues, to a Fox Clan samurai there is no greater beauty than which that can be found in the wild places of the Empire. Because of this quirk, Fox Clan art is not very well received at the Imperial Court. They bring twisted wooden staves, worn to a polish by the wind and the tide and covered in natural pearls plucked from oysters in the Crane bay. Fox art is described as "informal" and "rough," without consideration for the thousands of waves that wore the wood into its current state. As for other Artisan Skills, Emphases can denote medium or style. *Homebrew, Inspired by Way of the Minor Clans p.32*

HIGH SKILL Meditation

Emphases: Free Raises Recovery, Shut out the World, Spell Slots Recovery

Free Raises Recovery: This Emphasis allows the recovery of a limited number of daily Free Raises (such as those granted by school Techniques). To recover a Free Raise, the character must meditate for 1 hour and succeed at a Willpower/Meditation (Free Raises Recovery) roll TN 20 to recover 1 Free Raise. Raises can be made in order to regain more daily Free Raises on a 1 for 1 basis. This Emphasis cannot be used at the same time as the Void Points Recovery or Spell Slots Recovery Emphases; when meditating, a character can only regain one of those things. *Homebrew*

Shut out the World: This Emphasis emulates the ideology that this world is nothing but an illusion. A Willpower/Meditation (Shut out the World) TN 25 allows a character to ignore TN penalties not stemming from Wounds for number of rounds equal to his Void Ring. *Updated from Winter Court: Kyuden Seppun p.117 and Game Master's Guide p.171*

Spell Slots Recovery: This Emphasis is highly prized by shugenja and allows them to regain their precious spell slots. By meditating for 2 hours and succeeding at

a Void/Meditation (Spell Slots Recovery) roll TN 30, a character can regain 1 spell slot in each of his elements. Raises can be used to regain 1 more spell slot in an element (1 Raise) or 1 more spell slot in each elements (2 Raises). This Emphasis cannot be used at the same time as the Void Points Recovery or Free Raises Recovery Emphases; when meditating, a character can only regain one of those things. *homebrew*

Mastery Abilities

Rank 5: You recover 2 Free Raises from Meditation, when using the Free Raises Recovery Emphasis.

Rank 7: You recover 2 spell slots of each Ring from Meditation, when using the Spell Slots Recovery Emphasis.

Rank 10: You recover 3 Free Raises from Meditation, when using the Free Raises Recovery Emphasis.

HIGH SKILL Spellcraft

Emphases: Sway Kami, Tejina

Sway Kami: This Emphasis represents a shugenja's ability to cajole the kami. An Awareness/Spellcraft (Sway Kami) roll TN 20 allows a character to change the attitude of a kami by one step in his favor (ex: from hostile to indifferent). *Updated from Game Master's Guide p.174*

Tejina: This Emphasis represents intimate knowledge of illusory magic. A Perception/Spellcraft (Tejina) skill roll allows someone to pierce through illusions (TN typically equal to the spell's TN). The bonus from this Emphasis can be added to spellcasting rolls when casting illusion spells as well as to TNs to pierce a caster's own illusions. *Updated from Winter Court: Kyuden Asako p.68*

BUGEI SKILL Battle

Emphases: Specific Conditions

Specific Conditions: These Emphases represents the mastery of mass battles fought in a specific unusual condition. Such conditions can represent terrain (mountain pass), weather (winter warfare), of any other special situations (naval battles, unusual troops, etc). *Homebrew, inspired by Secrets of the Mantis p.31*

BUGEI SKILL Weapon Skills - Multiple Skills

Emphases: Called Shot, Disarm, Extra Attack, Feint, Grappling, Guard, Increased Damage, Knockdown

Maneuvers: These Emphases represents expertise in the use of particular maneuver (such as the Knockdown maneuver). The Emphasis bonus is added on the attack roll when the maneuver is used. *Homebrew*

BUGEI SKILL

Heavy Weapons

Emphasis: Ichiro Axe

Ichiro Axe: This Emphasis represents mastery in the use of Ichiro Axe. See p.63 for the mechanics of the Ichiro Axe. *Homebrew*

BUGEI SKILL

Gaijin Ranged Weapons

Emphases: Biau Dau, Pellet Bow, Sling, Staff Sling

This skill is used to wield the various (and often odd-looking) gaijin ranged weapons.

Specific Weapon: These Emphases represents expertise in the use of a particular type of gaijin ranged weapon (such as the Sling). See p.65-66 for the mechanics of the Biau Dau, Pellet Bow, Sling, and Staff Sling. *Homebrew, inspired by Way of the Unicorn p.100, 102.*

BUGEI SKILL

Kenjutsu

Emphases: Ox Blade, Ring Sword, Scimitar, Tachi

Ox Blade: This Emphasis represents mastery in the use of the Ox blade, a weapon used by the Ox samurai and designed after the gaijin ring sword. This Emphasis is necessary to be able to make use of this weapon's special abilities. See p.63 for the game mechanics of the Ox blade.

Ring Sword: This Emphasis represents mastery in the use of the Yobanjin ring sword, a gaijin weapon. This Emphasis is necessary to be able to make use of this weapon's special abilities. See p.63 for the game mechanics of the ring sword.

Scimitar: This Emphasis represents mastery in the use of the scimitar, a type of sword popular in the Burning Sands, introduced in Rokugan by the Unicorn clan, and the Moto family in particular.

Tachi: This Emphasis represents mastery in the use of the tachi, an ancient Rokugani sword worn hanging from the obi instead of tucked into it. See p.63 for the game mechanics of the tachi.

BUGEI SKILL

Knives

Emphases: Manji-Sai, Ujina Night Blade

Manji-Sai: This Emphasis is the mastery in the use of the manji-sai. See p.63 for the mechanics of the manji-sai. *Updated from Bearers of Jade p.14*

Ujina Night Blade: This Emphasis is the mastery in the use of the Ujina Night Blade. See p.63 for the mechanics of the Ujina Night Blade.

BUGEI SKILL

Kyujutsu

Emphases: Ashi-Kyu, Blind Shot, Defensive Shooting, Disarm Attack, Lezam, Quick String, Shigeto-Yumi, Tsuruchi Longbow

Specific Weapons: These Emphases represents expertise in the use of a particular type of bow (such as the Tsuruchi Longbow). See p.64-65 for the mechanics of the Ashi-Kyu, Lezam, and Shigeto-Yumi. *Homebrew*

Blind Shot: This Emphasis allows an archer to shoot at his target even if that target is hiding from the archer. The archer must be aware of the enemy's presence and have a rough idea of his location to use this ability. Roll Perception/Kyujutsu (Blind Shot) versus the opponent's Agility/Stealth (Hide). If successful, the character has pinpointed his opponent's location and can fire at it with only a +10 TN penalty. *Updated from Secrets of the Mantis p.66*

Defensive Shooting: This Emphasis represents an archer's ability of effectively use his bow in a melee without becoming an easy target. The archer gains a bonus to his TN to be Hit equal to his ranks in the Kyujutsu skill. The bonus applies only against melee attacks. This ability cannot be used without this Emphasis. *Updated from Game Master's Survival Guide p.60*

Disarm Attack: This Emphasis represents an archer's skill at disarming his foes from a distance. The character must make an attack rolls and call a number of Raises depending on the size of his opponent's weapon. Large weapons (tetsubo, no-dachi, dai tsuchi, most polearms) require 4 Raises. Medium weapons (katana, nage-yari, most staves, wakizashi) require 3 raises. Small weapons (tanto, aiguchi, kama) require 2 raises. This ability cannot be attempted without this Emphasis. *Updated from Secrets of the Mantis p.66*

Quick String: It takes 2 simple actions to draw and string a bow. This Emphasis helps in stringing a bow faster. A successful Agility/Kyujutsu (Quick String) roll TN 20 allows to do this with 1 simple action, but a failure means it takes 3 simple actions instead. Similarly, drawing and stringing a Han-kyu normally takes 1 simple action; the Han-Kyu can be drawn without taking an action but stringing it still takes 1 simple action. A successful Agility/Kyujutsu (Quick String) roll will allow to string it without taking an action, a failure will mean it will take 2 simple actions instead. *Homebrew, inspired by Game Master's Survival Guide p.60*

BUGEI SKILL

Spears

Emphases: Kitsune Nagamaki, Uchi-ne

Kitsune Nagamaki: This Emphasis represents mastery in the use of the Kitsune Nagamaki. See p.63 for the mechanics of the Kitsune Nagamaki. *Homebrew*

Uchi-ne: This Emphasis represents mastery in the use of the Uchi-ne. See p.66 for the mechanics of the Uchi-ne. *Homebrew*

BUGEI SKILL

Staves

Emphases: Gihei, Kai

Gihei: This Emphasis represents mastery in the use of gihei. See p.63 for the mechanics of the gihei. *Homebrew*

Kai: This Emphasis represents mastery in the use of the kai, an oar which is often used as practice tetsubo by the

Crab along the Wall. See p.63 for the game mechanics of the kai.

BUGEI SKILL

Defense

Emphases: Spell Evasion, Technique Evasion, Trap Evasion, Yadomejutsu

Spell Evasion: This Emphasis allows avoiding hazards of supernatural origin. The Emphasis bonus applies whenever rolling to avoid the effects of spells, kiho, tattoos, and similar abilities (if such a roll is required).

Homebrew

Trap Evasion: This Emphasis allows avoiding mundane hazards and traps. The Emphasis bonus applies whenever rolling to avoid traps, natural pitfalls, and similar hazards (if such a roll is required). *Homebrew, inspired by Bearers of Jade p.15 and The Way of Shadow p.109*

Yadomejutsu: While in the Full Attack posture, the character can cut arrows aimed at someone within 10 feet (TN equal the archer's attack roll). On Full Defense, the character can roll Agility/Defense (Yadomejutsu) and add to his TN to be hit against all ranged attacks he is aware of. (Note: Perceptive readers will realize that this is in fact part of the Technique from the Tsuruchi's Swordsman. If using Yadomejutsu as a skill instead of a School Technique, simply give the Tsuruchi Swordsman the benefit of 2 Free Raises on any Yadomejutsu skill rolls.) *Updated from Secrets of the Mantis p.67*

BUGEI SKILL

Hunting

Emphases: Specific Terrain (such as Mountain, Desert, Woodland, Marshes, Shadowlands, etc.)

Each Emphasis represents knowledge of a specific natural environment in regards to hunting and survival. For instance, the Mountain emphasis covers mountain passes and mountainous terrains. A character with this Emphasis is skilled at mountain climbing, foraging food in rocky terrain, etc. It can equate other Emphases (such as Climbing) pertaining to mountainous terrains. *Homebrew, Updated and inspired from Way of the Dragon p.40*

LOW SKILL

Stealth

Emphasis: Cover-up

Cover-up: This Emphasis allows hiding things or trails in the wilderness. When concealing an object, make an Intelligence/Stealth (Cover-up) roll. The result becomes the TN for the Perception/Investigation (Notice) roll to see through the cover-up. At the Gamemaster's discretion, the TN can be increased or lowered according to the number of objects being hidden (maximum number of objects that can be hidden must not be higher than your rank in the Stealth skill) or their size. When concealing trails, roll either Agility/Stealth (Cover-up) when you are covering your own trail or Perception/Stealth (Cover-up) when covering someone else's or a group's trail (the maximum number of person in that group must not be



higher than your rank in the Stealth skill). The result becomes the TN for the Perception/Hunting (Tracking) roll to see through the cover-up. *Updated from Way of the Naga p.53 (note: this was changed from Conceal to avoid confusion with the Conceal Emphasis of the Sleight of Hand skill)*

LOW SKILL

Traps

When a trap is triggered, it either makes an attack roll or has its target(s) roll Reflexes/Defense (Trap Evasion) TN 10. The trap maker gains a Free Raise if the trap must be re-set each time or triggered by a willing party (to a maximum of 1 Free Raise gained).

Raises: Raises can be made for the following effects:

- **Concealment:** Raises increase the TN by 5 per Raise for Perception/Investigation (Search) or Traps rolls made to find the trap.

- **Damage:** Raises will increase the DR of a trap by +1k0 per Raise.

- **Pain:** 2 Raises can be used to force the target to roll his Willpower vs. a TN equal to the damage inflicted by the trap or fall unconscious until such time as he receives healing or his wounds start to heal naturally.

- **Restrain:** Raises can increase the grappling Strength of a trap by 1 per Raise.

- **Speed:** Raises can add +10 per Raise to the Reflexes/Defense (Trap Evasion) roll to avoid the trap. 3 Raises can be used to force someone to spend a Void Point in order to be able to roll their Reflexes/Defense (Trap Evasion) roll.

Updated from Bearers of Jade p.15, inspired by The Way of Shadow p.109 and Lesser of Two Evils p.30

Mastery Abilities

Rank 5: Your traps have a base DR of 3k3.

Rank 7: Your traps have a base DR of 4k4. You gain a Free Raise for your traps' construction.

Rank 10: Your traps have a base DR of 5k5.

Kalajel

武者修行

The Dojo

Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages

BLOOD OF OSANO-WO (INHERENT) [5 POINTS]

You are a living descendant of Osano-wo. Thanks to his blood, you are immune to the negative effects of normal weather (you automatically succeed at any Stamina rolls related to weather). When targeting you, the TN of any hostile Fire spells, as well as other spells wielding the powers of the storm, lightning or other forces of Nature usually associated with Osano-Wo (Gamemaster's discretion) is increased by 5. Your Glory Rank is also considered 1 higher when in Crab or Mantis lands. Osano-Wo may occasionally grant his blessings to a character that is not a descendant, in which case this advantage is Granted, but it doesn't provide the Glory boost (Gamemaster's discretion). Crab and Mantis characters may purchase this advantage for 3 points. *Updated from Way of the Crab p.49, 2E Player's Guide p.98, 2E Game Master's Guide p.179, and Way of the Daimyo p.11.*



SEA LEGS [2 POINTS]

You have a natural affinity for the sea and feel perfectly at home in or on the water. You gain a Free Raise on all Athletics rolls made for swimming or keeping your balance on a ship. Mantis characters may purchase this advantage for 1 point. *Updated from Way of the Thief p.47.*

STORM LEGION MEMBER (GRANTED) [3 POINTS, YORITOMO CHARACTERS ONLY]

You are a member of the prestigious Storm Legion. If you take this advantage at character creation, you may

not reduce your starting Status or Glory. Furthermore, you may not take disadvantages such as Black Sheep, and you may not take another School than a Yoritomo family one. Other Mantis characters are loyal to you and unable to betray you, and things as simple as lying to you require them to spend a Void point. With Mantis characters, your Status is considered 1 rank higher, and your Glory 5 points higher. Finally, your yearly stipend is increased by 1 koku. *Updated from Way of the Minor Clan p.21.*

Disadvantages

CAPTAIN'S ANGER [+1 POINT]

Captain's Anger must be selected at the same time you take the Sworn Enemy disadvantage. Your Sworn Enemy is your commanding officer (ship's captain, leader of a bandit group, superior officer in a military unit, etc.). He will always choose you for the dirty work and most dangerous missions. He will constantly try to humiliate you and to get you killed. On one hand, you know exactly who your enemy is and where to find him, but on the other, getting rid of him is a lot more complicated as your mutual hatred is widely known and he is your superior. You might even find yourself forced to protect your enemy's life to avoid being accused of treason. *Updated from Way of the Thief p.47.*

KITSUNE TABOO [1-3 POINTS, KITSUNE CHARACTERS ONLY]

Some Kitsune choose to emulate the taboos their Spirit kin must obey. These samurai do so out of respect for the kitsune spirits, but also to help them being less conspicuous when they are in the presence of outsiders. See *Creatures of Rokugan Third Edition*, page 14, for taboos ideas. Other typical taboos include: do no harm to those of lower status, never eat rice, never say the plain truth, never interrupt another person when she speaks, etc. You may design, with the Gamemaster's approval, more constraining taboos that could be worth 2 or even 3 points, but you may not take more than three separate taboos, or more than 3 points worth of Kitsune taboos. *Updated from Way of the Minor Clan p.35.*

Okuma

Items

ARMOR OF THE TWILIGHT MOUNTAINS [5 POINTS, BOAR CHARACTERS ONLY]

The Boar master smiths created a few sets of armor made of the unique material and metals collected in the Twilight mountains, granting them an unusual connection to the spirit realms. This heavy armor's bonus to the wearer's TN to be Hit is increased by 3 for every rank of Ancestor Devotion the character possesses. *Homebrew*

GIHEI [1 POINT]

This is a blessed ceremonial bo staff commonly seen among the Dragonfly, but that is also used by monks and shugenja all over the Empire. The wielder gains +1k0 for Meditation and Theology skill rolls. *Homebrew*

ICHIRO AXE

[4 POINTS, BADGER CHARACTERS ONLY]

This weapon is a modified Ono with a DR of 1k4 and that also reduces Carapace by two. Those weapons have been handed down for generations from a Badger samurai to another, and they are still sharp after all of these years. *Homebrew*

KAI

This big wooden oar is wielded like a heavy staff with a DR of 2k1 and is mostly used by the peasants of the Crab Clan, though sailors of any clan may find themselves using them. *Updated from Bearers of Jade p.14.*

KITSUNE NAGAMAKI

[2 POINTS, FOX/KITSUNE CHARACTERS ONLY]

The Kitsune developed their skills with spears and the nagamaki in particular when their ancestral sword was lost. This Nagamaki variant has a DR of 2k3 and increases the wielder's TN to be Hit by the wielder's Reflexes trait. *Homebrew*

MANJI-SAI

The 1k2 Sai comes with two quillons: one pointing up, and one pointing down. The manji-sai increases the wielder's TN to be Hit by 5 when in the Full Defense posture. *Updated from Bearers of Jade p.14.*

OX BLADE

The Ox Blade is similar in design to the Yobanjin Ring Sword, but the hilt and blade are noticeably longer. This weapon uses the same rules as the Yobanjin Ring Sword (see below), but also grants a Free Raise for Attack rolls made while on horseback. *Homebrew*

REICHIN'S HELM

[2 POINTS, HARE CHARACTERS ONLY]

This helm increases the TN of maho spells targeting the wearer by 5 and also increases the wearer's TN to be Hit

by 2. This helm is not the original helm the founder of the Hare clan was wearing when fighting the Bloodspeakers, but one of the few duplicates created by the rare Hare clan shugenja to protect their clansmates hunting down maho-tsukai. *Homebrew*

TACHI

The 2k2 tachi is the ancestor to the katana. It is slightly longer and heavier than the katana, and more curved near the hilt. It was mostly used during the Dawn of the Empire era. Modern swords created on the tachi model, but using the advanced folded steel techniques, have a DR of 2k3 instead. *Homebrew*

UJINA NIGHT BLADE

[5 POINTS, HARE CHARACTERS ONLY]

The Ujina are not well known outside the lands of the Hare and fewer still know their strengths. The Ujina are some of the Stealthiest warriors in the empire, and few of their prey have every laid eyes on them before it was too late. This rare nemuranai is a 2k1 tanto, granting you +1k0 on Stealth rolls. *Homebrew*

YOBANJIN RING SWORD

The wide blade of this 1k2 sword, widely used by the Yobanjin, is equipped with large steel rings designed to ensnare an opponent's weapon. If the wielder is in the Full Defense posture and his opponent misses him by 5 or more on his Attack roll, the wielder may catch the opponent's weapon. Furthermore, the wielder (on his turn) can attempt to break the weapon he caught with an Opposed Strength roll. If he wins this roll by more than 5 for wooden weapons, 10 for peasant or poor quality weapons, 20 for average quality metal weapons, or 25 for fine or better quality steel weapons, then the weapon is destroyed. If the weapon does not break, the lock lasts only one round. This weapon can be used normally with the Kenjutsu skill, but the Ring Sword emphasis is necessary to allow the wielder to catch weapons with the rings. *Updated from Winter Court: Kyuden Asako p.27.*

Okuma & Wargames

Item	DR	Price
Armor of The Twilight Mountains	-	80 koku
Gihei	0k2	1 koku
Ichiro Axe	1k4	35 koku
Kai	2k1	4 bu
Kitsune Nagamaki	2k3	12 koku
Manji-sai	1k2	6 bu
Ox Blade	1k2	11 koku
Reichin's Helm	-	25 koku
Tachi	2k2	17 koku
Ujina Night Blade	2k1	15 koku
Yobanjin Ring Sword	1k2	10 koku

Expanded Ranged Weapons

Ranged weapons have a special place in the hearts of Minor Clan samurai. When you lack the resources of a Great Clan, it is only natural that, for the defense of your clan, you adopt weapons which allow you to kill your opponent before he can kill you.

Whether through the Wasp Clan's reliance on the bow, the Sparrow's adoption of the sling, or the preference the Badger shows for the nage-yari, in the mind of many samurai, ranged weapons and Minor Clans are tightly related...

Projectiles

Bamboo Head Arrow (Kuri-Ya)

These arrows have a sharp bamboo head instead of a steel head. These arrows are almost as lethal as normal arrows but have the advantage of costing less and thus are more popular among poor archers. *Homebrew*

DR: 1k2

Special Rules: 10's do not explode on Kuri-Ya damage rolls.

Dog Hunt Arrow (Ki-Hoko)

These are special fork-headed arrows used for the dog hunt (Inu-Ô-mono). *Homebrew*

DR: 1k2

Special Rules: None, except that a samurai who insists on using other types of arrows during an Inu-Ô-mono may become the target of ridicule...

Hunting Arrow (Makagoya)

These arrows are wooden arrows with second-grade steel tips and are used for hunting. Unlike the ki-hoko, their head are not forked. *Homebrew*

DR: 0k2

Special Rules: You may add your Hunting Skill to your Kyujutsu rolls made when hunting animals.

Pellet

This small metal pellet is slightly smaller than the average-sized stone used for sling but is much denser. Usually the pellets are used with the pellet bow (see below) but can sometimes be used with slings or staff slings. *Homebrew*

DR: 0k3

Special Rules: Ignores up to 2 points of Carapace. If used on a sling or staff sling, the DR is increased by +0k1.

Rock (Ishi)

Rocks might very well be the most ancient of weapons. Whether thrown, used to weight a fist, or used with a sling, rocks are a versatile weapon. *Homebrew*

DR: 0k1

Special Rules: If used in melee, rocks have a DR of 1k1. The Ishi may be thrown accurately at a range of up to 20'.

Target Arrow (Matoya)

These arrows have blunt wooden tips. They are designed to clobber their targets, leaving it battered but alive. *Homebrew*

DR: 0k1

Special Rules: Damage from target arrows cannot bring someone down below the « Out » Wound Level.

Ranged Weapons

Ashi-Kyu (Foot Bow)

The ashi-kyu is as long as the dai-kyu, but it is symmetrical and much more powerful. It is designed to be fired at stationary troop formations or large targets. To fire it, the archer lies on his back, braces the bow with both feet, and pulls back on the bowstring with his arms. While this awkward position makes it difficult to change the target (if it cannot be done by angling the legs, the archer must wriggle on the ground) and makes the archer all but immobile, it makes for a very powerful pull. *Updated from Way of the Unicorn p.100*

Strength: 7

The Dog Hunt (Inu Ô-mono)

The dog hunt is a sport sometimes practiced by the nobility of Rokugan. During a dog hunt, dogs (after which the sport is named) are placed inside a circle of rope stretched on poles. The archer is mounted and gallops between the inner circle and a larger concentric circle of rope. The ground of the central arena and the ring-shaped area is often covered in colored sand, with a different color for each.

The goal of the game is to kill the dog with as few arrows as possible before it can exit the second circle. There is a complex scoring system based on which part of the animal's body is hit (sometimes, some body parts will

be considered off-limits to increase difficulty). There is a variant of this sport (called Inuoi) which uses matoya arrows instead and in which the dogs are not killed. Sometimes other targets are used; the Crab are notorious for using captured goblins during their dog hunt, while Lost samurai sometimes kill slaves in their games. The Dog Hunt originally appeared in the adventure *The Silence within Sound* in the *Gamemaster's Pack*. This description expands upon the bits of information presented in that adventure, what is known about the sport as practiced in feudal Japan, and the Inu Ô-mono depiction in the manga *Lone Wolf and Cub*.

Projectiles	DR	Price
Bamboo Head Arrow (Kuri-Ya)	1k2	3 zeni
Dog Hunt Arrow (Ki-Hoko)	1k2	1 bu
Hunting Arrow (Makagoya)	0k2	6 zeni
Pellet	0k3	7 zeni
Rock (Ishi)	0k1	Free...
Target Arrow (Matoya)	0k1	1 bu

Weapon	Min. Strength	Strength	DR	Price
Ashi-Kyu	3	7	-	35 koku
Biau Dau	-	-	1k1	2 koku
Lezam	3	4	-	20 koku
Pellet Bow	3	4	-	30 koku
Shigeto-Yumi	-	3	-	40 koku
Sling	-	-	2k2	2 zeni
Staff Sling	-	-	3k2	12 zeni
Uchi-ne	-	-	0k2	2 koku

Minimum Strength: 3 (although, if a samurai tries and draws this bow in the usual manner, he will need a minimum strength of 6).

Range: 1500'

Special Rules: It takes a Complex action to set up an ashi-kyu. The ashi-kyu gains the same strength bonus to damage as an axe or heavy weapon (again, using the lower of the user or the bow's strength). Arrows for the Ashi-Kyu cost twice as much, due to their rarity and larger size.

Biau Dau

This is a particular type of throwing knife that is all blade and no handle. The large blade is crescent-shaped, like a boomerang but not as incurved. The weapon seems to be hailing from the Yobanjin tribes and has been adopted by Ox scouting parties who often employ this weapon from hiding. *Homebrew*

DR: 1k1

Special Rules: The biau dau may be thrown accurately at a range of up to 30'.

Lezam

This stiff bamboo or whalebone bow is used exclusively by the Tsuruchi, and is rarely seen outside Tsuruchi lands. A heavy iron chain bends the bow instead of the conventional bowstring. The lezam is mostly used for training the new Tsuruchi samurai on how to draw the bow effectively. The lezam is not curved like the other Rokugani bows, which gives it a peculiar, gaijin look. The handle of the lezam is placed on the middle of the bow, where the other Rokugani bows have it near the bottom. This is because the lezam hails from the Ivory Kingdoms; it was smuggled back by the Tsuruchi into Rokugan when Yoritomo Aramasu declared war on the Ivory Kingdoms during the War of Spirits. *Updated from The Complete Exotic Arms Guide p.13*

Strength: 4

Minimum Strength: 3

Range: 300'

Special Rules: The lezam grants a Free Raise on any Instruction rolls involving the Kyujutsu skill. You suffer

a +5 TN penalty on all Stealth skill rolls. +10 to all TNs when fired from horseback.

Pellet Bow

This is another foreign weapon from the Yobanjin tribes, adopted by the Ox Clan. This weapon looks much like a normal bow (albeit, a gaijin-looking one), but attached to the bowstring is a leather pouch to hold a pellet. Unlike a sling, this bow must be used with pellets. *Homebrew*

Strength: 4

Minimum Strength: 3

Range: 300'

Special Rules: +10 to all TNs if fired from horseback.

Shigeto-Yumi

Only the rich and venerated samurai of Rokugan use the shigeto-yumi. The shigeto-yumi is completely lacquered, and is bound with rattan in intervals along the bow. The rattan does not strengthen the bow in any way, but serves as decoration. The more rattan used, the more expensive the bow, and usually only daimyos or generals receive a shigeto-yumi with rattan bindings entirely covering the bow. The shigeto-yumi serves as a badge of status and prestige. Most samurai consider the shigeto-yumi an unnecessary luxury, and frown upon those who own a shigeto-yumi not given to them by their daimyo. On the other hand, many Unicorn and Mantis samurai purchase shigeto-yumi to flaunt their wealth. The samurai who are given a shigeto-yumi by their daimyo rarely use it out of battle. *Updated from The Complete Exotic Arms Guide p.14*

Strength: 3

Range: 300'

Special Rules: +10 to all TNs when fired from horseback. A samurai wielding a shigeto-yumi gains a Free Raise on any social rolls made to impress someone. If it is ever discovered that the samurai obtained a shigeto-yumi in another way than as a gift from his daimyo, the Free Raise is lost.

Sling

The sling is another barbarian tool the Unicorn brought back from their voyages. They know that other Rokugani do not consider rocks to be deadly weapons, nor a sling itself to be anything other than a foolish-looking barbarian accessory, or in extreme cases, a nasty ninja trick. That is, everyone but the Sparrow who have adopted the sling as their trademark weapon, because it is cheap, easy to carry, easy to use, and unlike bow strings, they can withstand the rugged weather of the Sparrow lands. Many Unicorns have been able to sneak in a sling posing it as an eye patch or some foreign accessory as well as a few "lucky stones" where weapons would otherwise have been prohibited. *Updated from Way of the Unicorn p.102*

DR: 2k2

Range: 225'

Staff Sling

The staff sling is the logical technological advancement of the sling. Basically, it is a sling fixed at the end of a staff. The extra leverage provided by the staff when the sling is spun increases the centrifugal force increasing

both impact and range. *Updated from Way of the Unicorn p.102*

DR: 3k2

Range: 300'

Special Rules: The staff sling can also be used to strike like a jo.

Uchi-ne

This is a short, heavy javelin that looks like a miniature arrow or a large dart. They can either be thrown over short distances or used effectively for thrusting and jabbing attacks. Daimyo sometimes carry ornate uchi-ne when traveling. *Homebrew*

DR: 0k2

Special Rules: An uchi-ne rolls one less damage die against human-sized and smaller opponents just like other spears or polearms. The uchi-ne may be thrown accurately at a range of up to 30'.

Bow Improvements

Emergency Spearhead

In times of war, Rokugani archers have been known to modify their dai-kyu with a pointy head at one extremity, to allow them to use the bow as an emergency spear. Using a bow in such a way however is unnatural and can put great strain on it. It is unlikely that any single thrust will harm the bow but repeated abuse will probably ruin it. The Lion Clan claims that this improvement was brought on by Matsu Koritome. They started implementing this modification on many of their archer unit in order to honor their fallen hero from the Battle of White Stag. In fact, among the Lion Clan, such bows are often referred to as a Koritome bow or a Koritome spear. This modification can only be applied to a dai-kyu or ashi-kyu since all other bows are simply too small or fragile to be used as an emergency spear. *Homebrew*

DR: 2k2

Special Rules: A bow used as an emergency spear rolls one less damage die against human-sized and smaller opponents just like other spears or polearms. If three or more dice explode on damage with the emergency spear, the bow is destroyed.

Price: +6 koku to price of bow



Extra Powerful Bow

Rokugani sometimes employ extra powerful bows which require more than one man to string (though a single archer can draw the bow normally, as long as he possesses the minimum Strength required). Such bows are relatively rare; two- and three-man bows are the most commonly seen among those (the Tsuruchi Longbow's design is in fact partly based on an improved two-man bow), but the maximum is the legendary seven-man bow. It is rumored that Osano-Wo employed a seven-man bow in his campaign against the trolls, which he could string and draw all by himself! The strengthening of the bow's limbs must be built-in when it is created; it is not possible to upgrade an existing bow into an extra powerful bow, and not all types of bow can be constructed in such a way (Gamemaster's discretion). *Homebrew*

Special Rules: Due to the need to coordinate the group effort when stringing an extra powerful bow, the process usually takes a number of rounds equal to its man rating. However, when the archer is strong enough to string the bow by himself (see the table and notes), drawing and stringing such a bow will take 3 Complex Actions. Using the Quick String Emphasis (see p.60) is possible only in this case, and will remove 1 Complex Action to the duration of this process if it was a success or add 1 Complex Action otherwise.

Fire Arrows

By dipping an arrow in a flammable substance such as tar and by lighting it up, a samurai can transform a normal

Extra Powerful Bow Modifiers

Man Rating *	Damage	Strength	Min. Strength **	Range	Price
Two-man (4)	+1k0	+1	+1 (3)	+10%	+2 koku
Three-man (6)	+1k1	+1	+2 (4)	+25%	+9 koku
Four-man (8)	+2k1	+2	+3 (5)	+40%	+20 koku
Five-man (10)	+2k2	+2	+4 (6)	+60%	+36 koku
Six-man (12)	+3k2	+3	+5 (7)	+75%	+56 koku
Seven-man (14)	+3k3	+3	+6 (8)	+90%	+80 koku

* The number shown between parentheses indicates the minimum total Strength required to string the bow. For instance, a character with Strength 4 could string a two-man bow without help, and two characters with Strength 3 would be enough to string a three-man bow.

** This value modifies the minimum Strength normally required to fire the bow. If there was no minimum Strength required, use the value shown between parentheses. For instance, a Yumi built as a two-man bow would require an archer with a minimum Strength of 3.

arrow into a terrifying weapon. Normally, such arrows are used to set buildings or siege engines ablaze, but sometimes they are used against enemy troops, inflicting severe burns in the process. *Homebrew*

DR: As base arrow.

Special Rules: Each fire arrow deals 1k1 fire damage each round until the arrow is removed (removing an arrow without wounding the target takes a Complex Action, it can be done as a Simple Action instead, but doing so will inflict the base DR of the arrow in Wounds to the target, note that blunt arrows such as the humming bulb or the target arrow won't lodge into the target and as such will only inflict this additional fire damage once when they hit). The fire damage from multiple arrows stacks, but the die does not explode.

Price: As base arrow plus price of the pitch.

Onislayer Arrows

Popular among the Crabs, this improvement is more akin to a minor nemuranai than a mundane improvement. The tips of these rare arrows are set with a small jade bead. *Homebrew*

DR: As base arrow

Special Rules: an Onislayer Arrow ignores Carapace and Invulnerability of Tainted creatures. It also adds twice the archer's Honor to its damage roll total when fired at Tainted creatures. Finally, the archer may spend a Void point to increase damage just as he could with a sword. However, against non-tainted targets, the damage roll is reduced by 0k1. The jade bead is always crushed upon impact, making it impossible to ever reuse the arrow.

Price: +20 koku

Kalajel

Horses

All horses are considered to have at least 4 points of the Fleet Advantage (per Gamemaster's discretion, *Homebrew*); also as per p. 266 of the *Legend of the Five Rings Third Edition* core book, quadrupeds are considered to have their Water ring doubled for the purposes of movement. This option has been implemented so that PCs have a harder time outrunning a horse.

ROKUGANI STEED

Height: 3'4" **Weight:** 700 lbs **Life Span:** 30+ years

Air: 2	Earth: 2	Fire: 1	Water: 3
	Stamina: 4	Agility: 2	Strength: 6

Kick attack to hit: 2k2 **Kick damage:** 4k2
TN to be Hit: 10 (15 at a gallop)
Wounds per wound level: 8

THE GAIJIN RIDING HORSE

Height: 5'8" **Weight:** 1300 lbs **Life Span:** 25 years

Air: 2	Earth: 3	Fire: 1	Water: 3
	Stamina: 4	Agility: 2	Strength: 6

Kick attack to hit: 3k2 **Kick damage:** 6k3
TN to be Hit: 10 (15 at a gallop)
Wounds per wound level: 10

THE UTAKU STEED

Height: 5'4" **Weight:** 1000 lbs **Life Span:** 25-30 years

Air: 2	Earth: 3	Fire: 2	Water: 3
	Stamina: 5		Strength: 6

Kick attack to hit: 3k3 **Kick damage:** 6k3
TN to be Hit: 10 (15 at a gallop)
Wounds per wound level: 12
Special: Riders gain one Free Raise with any action that uses the Horsemanship skill.

OX ASSAULT STEED

The origins of this fourth breed of Rokugani horse comes from the limited funding the Ox Clan had at its creation, the scarce grazing land it can procure its horses, and its leader's own beginnings. Morito was born into the unicorn clan but certain events lead to his being forsaken by his family and clan. It was only much later after the Clan War and second Day of Thunder that Morito was allowed to found his own clan.

He established his clan in the lands of the Phoenix, which were once Snake. Initially, the Phoenix of course protested such a move, but upon hearing that Emperor Toturi I sided with Morito, affirming that the Phoenix did not have sufficient man power to take care of these mountainous lands, they had to accept the Ox's takeover.

Many of Morito's first followers came from the Shinjo family, and quite a few of them brought their own steed to their new clan. But with such a limited stock of Shinjo steeds, Morito had to acquire Rokugani riding ponies to meet the needs of his clan. After some time the two breeds intermingled into a new one and thus the fourth race of Rokugani horse was born.

The sale of Ox steed is one of the primary resources of the clan, and they equip most of the cavalry units of the army of the Minor Clans Alliance.

Ox Assault Steed (homebrew)

Height: 4'8" **Weight:** 900 lbs **Life Span:** 25 years

Air: 2	Earth: 3	Fire: 1	Water: 3
	Stamina: 4	Agility: 2	Strength: 6

Kick attack to hit: 3k2 **Kick damage:** 5k2
TN to be Hit: 10 (15 at a gallop)
Wounds per wound level: 10

Special: When you charge an enemy from horseback you gain an extra 1k0 on damage. A mounted charge is made when you move at least half your full movement in a straight line while on horseback and conclude your movement with an attack on your enemy.

Wargames

Kata

UPDATED KATA Fight Back the Darkness

Preparation Time: 10 minutes
Duration: 120 minutes
Rank: Insight Rank 3
Cost: 5
Special: Must have Willpower 3

Effect: Originally, only Yoritomo Kumiko knew this kata that she developed to keep her Taint in check. The Kuni

who were observing her have attempted to duplicate it, but only a few succeeded. The user gains 2 free raises to resist all attempts to corrupt the soul, mind or body (i.e. the Shadowlands taint, Shadow taint, or Spirit Realm control). This kata ends if the user voluntarily accepts corruption in any form (including drugs or alcohol).
Void: By spending one Void point, the practitioner gains one additional free raise for the whole duration of the kata. *Updated from Secrets of the Mantis, p.24.*

Okuma

Spells

Archer's Reach

Air spell, Mastery Level 1
Duration: Instantaneous
Area of Effect: One ranged attack weapon
Range: 90'

This is a secret spell of the Centipede Clan/Moshi Family. The ranged weapon sees his range doubled and ignore all distance penalties for one projectile. **Special Raises:** You may make 1 Raise to increase the range of the weapon by an additional 60' (apply this bonus after its basic range is doubled). You may make 1 Raise to increase the range of the spell by 30'. You may make 1 Raise to affect one additional projectile. You may make 4 Raises to be able to affect the projectile of a siege engine such as a catapult or a ballista.

Bane of the Kitsune

Air spell, Mastery Level 5
Duration: Permanent
Area of Effect: One target
Range: 40'

This is a secret spell of the Fox Clan/Kitsune Family. The target is now forced to follow one Kitsune taboo (for more information about taboos, see *Creatures of Rokugan* 3rd Edition). For every day he doesn't, he must make an Earth roll vs. TN 20. If the roll is failed, the target becomes sick (movement is halved, Agility and Strength are reduced by 2 ranks, natural healing is 10 times slower, and the target cannot be healed magically). He then must make a second Earth roll vs. TN 20 or become crippled (Down wound level for mechanical purposes) until he respects

the taboo again. To get rid of the curse, the target must convince the caster to lift the curse, kill the caster himself (if the caster dies from other causes, the curse remains), or be targeted by a healing spell of ML 4 or higher. *Updated from Way of the Shugenja p.82.*

Crow's Vision

Air spell, Mastery Level 2
Duration: School Ranks hours
Area of Effect: Self
Range: Self / touch (see below)

This is a secret spell of the Fox Clan/Kitsune Family. At any time during the spell's duration, you can close your eyes and concentrate, allowing you to see the landscape around you as if you were a bird flying overhead.

Special Raises: You can make 3 Raises to grants the effect of this spell to one additional target. *Updated from Way of the Minor Clans p.35.*

Crushing Waves

Water spell, Mastery Level 3
Duration: Instantaneous
Area of Effect: One target +1 per Raise (maximum 3 other targets)
Range: 100'

This is a secret spell of the Mantis Clan. A wave is summoned on the target, dealing it 6k3 damage and forcing the target to make a contested roll of Strength against the Water Ring of the caster or be pushed 15 feet away. A Free Raise is granted when casting this spell within 500 feet of the sea.

AIR SPELLS

Archer's Reach (ML 1), Crow's Vision (ML 2), Ride the Whirlwind (ML 2), Bane of the Kitsune (ML 5)

EARTH SPELLS

Touch of the Kitsune (ML 3), Elemental Vessel (ML 4)

FIRE SPELLS

Dance of the Fireflies (ML 1), Flames of the Goddess (ML 3)

WATER SPELLS

Crushing Waves (ML 3), Suitengu's Wrath (ML 5)

Dance of the Fireflies**Fire spell, Mastery Level 1**

Duration: Three rounds per School Rank

Area of Effect: 10' diameter circle

Range: 100'

This is a secret spell of the Centipede Clan/Moshi Family. This spell summons a small whirling cloud of orange-red sparks, which can be moved 10' per round with a successful Willpower roll vs. TN 10. However, this spell requires no concentration on the shugenja's side. While caught within the tornado, a shugenja must make a successful Willpower roll vs. TN 10 before being able to cast a spell. Creatures who rely on sight to attack suffer a -1k0 penalty on their Attack and Defense rolls, and their TN to be Hit is reduced by five. Two Raises are needed to make ranged attacks targeting creatures inside the tornado. Creatures immune to fire, who don't require sight to attack, or with an Earth Ring greater than 3 are immune to this spell. *Updated from Secrets of the Mantis p.50.*

Elemental Vessel**Earth spell, Mastery Level 4**

Duration: 2 days per Insight Ranks

Area of Effect: One kobune

Range: touch

This is a secret spell of the Mantis Clan. This spell summons a kobune made of earth and rock. The duration of the spell can be extended by 2 days per Insight Rank of the caster by casting the spell again while on the ship. *Updated from Way of the Shugenja p.54.*

Flames of the Goddess**Fire spell, Mastery Level 3**

Duration: Total Concentration (maximum 10 rounds)

Area of Effect: One fire

Range: 25'

This is a secret spell of the Centipede Clan/Moshi Family. This spell summons one flaming spirit from an existing fire (at least fire camp sized, 1 foot in diameter) that will obey to the shugenja's commands. Such spirits are immune to

normal weapons but vulnerable to water (5 gallons or more will destroy one) and burn everything they touch (XkX damage, where X is the caster's Fire Ring). They obey simple orders.

Special Raise: You may make 1 Raise to summon another spirit who can act independently of the others, but the fire must be big enough to accommodate them all. *Updated from Way of the Minor Clans p.74.*

Ride the Whirlwind**Air spell, Mastery Level 2**

Duration: 3 minutes per School Rank

Area of Effect: Self

Range: Self

This is a secret spell of the Centipede Clan/Moshi Family. A whirlwind appears, lifting the shugenja into air. He now flies at the speed of 60' per round, 30' when ascending and 120' when descending. He cannot carry more than he would normally be able to lift, and can stop this spell at any time. He can also direct the whirlwind when stopping the spell in any direction, inflicting [Air Ring]k1 damage to the target, and forcing the target to make a Contested roll of Strength against the Air of the caster or be pushed 5 feet backward. If the spell ends while the shugenja is still flying, he slowly goes down by 60 feet per round, for 1k1 rounds. If he is still in the air after that, he suffers the normal 1k1 of damage per remaining 10 feet. *Updated from Secrets of the Mantis p.50.*

Suitengu's Wrath**Water spell, Mastery Level 5**

Duration: One hour

Area of Effect: One storm

Range: 5000'

This is a secret spell of the Mantis Clan. This spell must be cast within 1 mile of a big water surface, creating a 5000 feet diameter monsoon. It deals XkX damage, where X is caster's Insight Rank, to everyone and everything (including structures, ships, etc.) caught in the area of effect. *Updated from Way of the Shugenja p.54.*

Touch of the Kitsune**Earth spell, Mastery Level 3**

Duration: 5 minutes per School Rank

Area of Effect: One target

Range: Touch

This is a secret spell of the Fox Clan/Kitsune Family. The target is granted fox abilities, increasing his Agility, Intelligence and Awareness by 1, and rolls +2k0 for Hunting, Stealth and Etiquette (Sincerity) and Deceit (Lying) skill rolls. This duration is doubled within a forest. *Updated from Way of the Shugenja p.82.*

Okuma & Wargames

Dojo of the Minor Clans

Using the format introduced in *Emerald Empire*, this article provides a list of several major dojo of the Minor Clans. In some cases, the dojo were described in a Third Edition book (published before *Emerald Empire*), but didn't receive the mechanical advantage. When this happens, the benefit and rules for these dojo are given here, but their description is limited to a reference to the original book.

Schools which name is followed by an asterisk (*) refer to Schools or Paths introduced in this issue of *Musha Shugyo*.

All clans

Embassy of the Alliance

School: Minor Clan Diplomat, Kasuga Courtier

Benefit: When interacting with other Minor Clan samurai, you gain +1k0 to all social rolls

(Originally described in *Art of the Duel*, p.142)

Badger Clan

Badger's Home Dojo

School: Ichiro Bushi, Ichiro Javelinier*, Yoritomo Bushi, Tsuruchi Bounty Hunter

Benefit: Samurai of the Ichiro family may purchase Different School for Tsuruchi and Yoritomo schools for 1 fewer point per Insight Rank

When the Badger Clan was nearly wiped out following the War against the Shadow, the Mantis sympathized with their plight and offered the Ichiro fealty as a family of the Mantis. The broken but proud Badger refused politely, and eventually it was agreed that the Mantis would provide the Badger with a small school and barracks within Tsuruchi lands; since the Badger could not even spare any experienced teachers, the Mantis also supplied sensei to teach the young Ichiro students. The students of the Badger's Home Dojo learn a combination of Tsuruchi and Yoritomo techniques, as the renowned physical might of the Ichiro is readily applied to the Way of the Mantis and the Wasp. Even though most Badger samurai have returned to their own lands following the revelation of Ryoshun's Shrine, a small number of students each year are still sent to the Badger's Home Dojo as a reminder of the friendship between the Mantis and the Badger. (Updated from *Secrets of the Mantis*, p. 71)

Fallen Mountain Dojo

School: Ichiro Bushi, Ichiro Defender*

Benefit: You suffer no Honor loss for using the Commerce or Underworld skill when acting as a mercenary

After Hideo no Oni ravaged the lands of the Badger, surviving samurai established the Fallen Mountain Dojo in the City of the Rich Frog. Located near the center of the city, the school looks like a small fortress; during the War of the Rich Frog, it was a heavily fortified stronghold, and Badger samurai resolutely patrolled the area around the dojo (much to the annoyance of the Lion, Unicorn, and Kaeru forces). For many years, Fallen Mountain Dojo was the only place in the Empire where the Way of the Badger was taught. The open courtyard of the school is filled with massive boulders, which students push, lift, and carry as a means of developing the legendary physical strength of the Ichiro. In addition to the traditional training, students were also given cursory instruction in the ways of the merchant, since most of the Badger samurai found work as mercenaries and caravan guards. After the restoration of the Badger lands, Fallen Mountain Dojo is still a prestigious school, and a large stone statue of Ichiro Tashimi, the first sensei, now stands outside the school as a reminder of the Badger's unyielding presence. (Updated from *Way of the Samurai*, p.75)

Heart of the Mountain Dojo

School: Ichiro Bushi, Ichiro Defender*, Ichiro Javelinier*, Ichiro Mountain Legion*

Benefit: When rolling for Full Defense, add your Strength to the total.

(Originally described in *Art of the Duel*, p.141)

Bat Clan

Komori's Island Monastery

School: Komori Shugenja

Benefit: The cost of increasing your Ancestor's devotion is reduced by 1 point

When the Bat Clan was awarded Minor Clan status, Yoritomo Kumiko awarded her former mentor Komori with a small island in the northern edge of Mantis territory. Originally, the only structure on the island was the quiet monastery where Komori kept the young Kumiko hidden, but a small village and port has since been constructed to accommodate the needs of the new Minor Clan. Bat Clan shugenja study at the monastery, which is

Dragonfly Clan

Still Water Temple

School: Tonbo Shugenja, Tonbo Spearman*

Benefit: You may use the Divination skill one additional time per day

(Originally described in *Art of the Duel*, p.144)

Falcon Clan (pre-Crab)

Hitokage Dojo

School: Toritaka Bushi, Toritaka Spirit-Hunter*

Benefit: Students may roll +1k0 on all visual Perception rolls

Since their days as a Minor Clan, the Toritaka family has maintained a small dojo located on the outskirts of the Shinomen Forest. The school consists of a few unremarkable buildings on the edge of the forest, and the massive trees of the Shinomen cast long shadows over Hitokage Dojo. Students spend most of their time meditating and sparring with practice weapons, but also spend significant time studying scrolls on the nature and behavior of gaki, shiryo, and other spirits. The Toritaka sensei are known for several unique training practices. The first is the traditional dueling style of the Falcon, in which opponents are blindfolded and must slice through thrown targets (usually fruit) with a naginata before they hit the ground. This practice dates back to the early days of the Minor Clan, when the small number of trained bushi dissuaded the clan from sanctioning lethal duels. The sensei often take groups of students into the edges of the Shinomen, and each student must undertake a three-day excursion deeper into the forest as part of their gempukku. After each day's exercises, all students at Hitokage dojo are required to tell their sensei everything they observed that day, and the sensei carefully questions the student so that the young Falcon learns what details he missed. (*Homebrew*, expanded from *Way of the Minor Clans*, p.82-83. After their joining with the Crab Clan, the dojo's teachings were slightly altered, and it was renamed Sharp Eye Dojo; see *Masters of War*, p. 37, and 15r.com for the associated rules)

Firefly Clan

Firefly Keep Dojo

School: Hotaru Bushi, Night Watchman*

Benefit: All the Know the School skills in which you have at least 1 rank are considered 1 rank higher for the purpose of determining their benefits against the students of these schools

The primary dojo of the Hotaru Bushi school is located within the large watchtower known as Hotaru Torid-e. As the Firefly rarely entertain courtiers, the school uses much of the ground floor of the keep as a training area. The techniques of the Hotaru emphasize observation and awareness of the enemy's techniques, and all students learn to identify many major martial styles from across the



built high atop a series of cliffs overlooking the sea, and large bats can be seen flocking nearby, especially during the early evening. Komori Shugenja devote themselves to the study of ancestor spirits and their understanding of the spirit realms is second only to the Kitsus. As the Bat are still a very small Minor Clan, the students are taught by Komori himself. *Homebrew*

Boar Clan

Shiro Yaban-no Buta Dojo

Schools: Heichi Bushi, Heichi Impaler*

Benefit: all students of this dojo gain +1k0 on all their crafting rolls when working on metal pieces of armor or weapons

Once the central school of the Boar Clan's distinctive fighting style, Shiro Yaban-no Buta Dojo is located in a mid-sized keep deep in the Twilight Mountains. As the remote lands of the Boar precluded any attacks on the castle, most of the available space was dedicated to the school. In fact, many students who had passed their gempukku continued to live in the dojo's spacious barracks, and often took part in training exercises alongside the new students. Along with training in the martial arts (with a focus in the use of the Boar's signature weapon, the Mai Chong), students of the dojo also studied the art of armorsmithing and learnt the clan's knowledge of mining practices. Since the Boar Clan vanished centuries ago, Shiro Yaban-no Buta has stood empty, dust gathering within the stone walls... (*Homebrew*, expanded from *Way of the Minor Clan*, p.113)

Empire. The master sensei is Hotaru Tasami, a 50-year-old bushi about to retire. As a younger man, Tasami was an infamous bounty hunter, and his stubborn determination works students to the edge of exhaustion. (*Homebrew*, expanded from *Way of the Daimyo*, p.92-95)

Fox Clan (pre-Mantis)

Kitsune no Mori

School: Kitsune Shugenja, Kitsune Shinrinkei*

Benefit: You gain a Free Raise on all Hunting and Animal Handling rolls.

This dojo was founded during the tumultuous time of the Clan War era by an orphaned shugenja named Kitsune Jachoko. She fled into the Kitsune Mori when her aunt had mistreated her for months. There she met a woman named Ame who took in the young orphan and taught her the ways of the shugenja, the forest spirits, and the legends of the kitsune. When Jachoko reached 16, Ame told her it was time for them to part ways and gifted Jachoko her forest-green kimono. Two years later, Jachoko decided to head back to civilization. Ever since that time, she has taken with her shugenja willing to live and study into the wilderness to better understand the ways of nature. This dojo is particular in that it has no buildings and is in fact the whole Kitsune Mori. Jachoko is still the master sensei, and even though she was born before the Clan War, she still looks no older than twenty. She is always seen wearing an old but pristine forest-green kimono. (Updated from *Way of the Shugenja*, p.81)

Hare Clan

Reichin's Refuge Dojo

School: Usagi Bushi, Usagi Battle-Runner*, Usagi Elite Guard*

Benefit: You may purchase the Daredevil Advantage for 2 points less

Reichin's Refuge was established by Ozaki himself as one of his first official proclamations. Located in a small village a few hours' walk from Shiro Usagi, the school consists of a two-story keep. Most of the space on the first and second floors is dedicated to barracks and storage, since most of the training occurs outside of the building. A large field full of stepping posts helps students learn balance, and a massive web of intertwining ropes is used to develop the agile motions required by the Way of the Hare. Since most Hare techniques emphasize unarmed strikes, targets made out of rope wrapped around wooden posts are found throughout the training area. It is not uncommon to find students and sensei alike participating in a fast-paced game of kemari in the middle of the day. In the evenings, when the dim light makes outside training difficult, the sensei deliver lectures on the Kolat, Bloodspeaker sects, other criminals, and the aspects of Imperial law the Hare samurai will utilize against their enemies. Usagi Takeshi, the master sensei of Reichin's

Refuge, insists that speed and athletic abilities are still central to the Hare's success. (Updated from *Way of the Samurai*, p.76)

Ujina Torid-e

School: Hare Shadowbane*, Ujina Skirmisher, Woodland Tracker

Benefit: When anyone attempts to recognize you with an Awareness roll, your Glory is considered 1 Rank lower

(Originally described in *Art of the Duel*, p.144)

Mantis Clan (pre-Great Clan)

Dojo of the Grand Song

School: Any Mantis School

Benefit: You gain +1k0 on any Storytelling or Perform (Singing) rolls

This dojo was founded around the time of Gusai by a wandering Mantis singer named Kinei who was trying to find his place among a clan of mercenaries. After having attended many winter courts in Crane and Phoenix lands and having been paid handsomely with gold by both clans, he was given permission by Gusai to found a small village; the Village of the Grand Song where he later built this dojo. Training takes less than a year which means there's around half a dozen students at the dojo at any time. (Updated from *Secrets of the Mantis*, p.21)

Monkey Clan

Little Tower Dojo

Schools: Toku Bushi, Minor Clan Explorer, Ronin Duelist

Benefit: Students of the Little Tower Dojo may purchase any of the Striking as the Element kata (Striking as Earth, Fire, Water, Wind, or Void) for one point less than normal

Built around a large abandoned stone Naga watchtower in Monkey lands, the Little Tower Dojo is a small school of swordsmanship that focuses on both traditional Iaijutsu and Kenjutsu styles. The sensei of the dojo is Aoki, a close friend of Toku who often captivates his students with stories of the General's legendary feats. Aoki strongly insists on a traditional study of the blade, and his students are invariably the finest duelists in the Monkey clan. The dojo itself is located within the stone walls of the tower, and Aoki and his students, no more than twenty at a time, reside in a series of small buildings ringing the tower's base. One of the unique traditions of the Little Tower Dojo has been for the students to paint the rice-paper walls of the buildings with images of famous historical duelists, as it is said that the eyes of ancestors from all clans are aware of the Toku samurai's virtue. (Originally described in "Brothers of the Monkey")

Shiro Morito Dojo

School: Ox Bushi**Benefit:** When you are mounted and attacking an opponent that is on foot, you gain a bonus to your Attack roll equal to half your Strength

Students at Shiro Morito spend a significant amount of their time at the dojo studying the history of the Empire. However, instead of the history as recorded in the Miya archives and Ikoma libraries, Ox samurai are told they are learning a version of history with no clan bias. Some will later realize, after their gempukku, that it is in fact history from the Kolat's point of view. Shiro Morito is located on the edge of a large plateau that overlooks the Dragon Heart Plain, and the buildings of the dojo are located at the center of the castle. A large flat expanse to the north is used for cavalry training and maneuvers, and the thundering of countless hooves can be heard throughout mountains. The master sensei, a gruff former ronin named Onegano, is harsh and unforgiving, and has become something of a legend among the younger Ox samurai. Onegano never speaks of his past before he met Morito, and innumerable rumors circulate among the students about his possible background. (Updated from *Way of the Samurai*, p.78)

Sparrow Clan

Kyuden Suzume

School: Suzume Bushi, Suzume Farmer-Warrior*, Suzume Storyteller, Suzume Duelist, Suzume House Guard***Benefit:** Choose among your school skills one Lore skill for which you gain +1k0 on all rolls

Like most Sparrow samurai, the primary school of the Sparrow Clan is unassuming and often disregarded at first glance. In fact, visiting samurai often have difficulty locating the Kyuden Suzume dojo, a small one-story stone building with no visible exterior decorations or signage. The interior of the dojo, however, is intricately and carefully decorated, as every available surface is covered with the exquisite art of Suzume masters. Overall, the dojo is much more like a temple than a martial academy. Students spend much of their day in meditation. Since the humid climate of the Suzume Hills makes using paper impractical, nearly half of the space in the dojo is taken up by large trays of sand, which students use to practice calligraphy. The most advanced students are permitted small wooden tablets for their calligraphy – these tablets are highly valued by Sparrow samurai and peasants alike, and are found in nearly all homes in the Suzume Hills. Each night, older students take turns telling stories to the younger Sparrow. The master sensei is a quiet, older samurai-ko named Mochiko. Despite her deep devotion to the Tao, Suzume Mochiko is one of the most skilled swordsmen in the Clan. (Updated from *Way of the Samurai*, p.79)

Hidden Dagger Dojo

School: Kasuga Bushi, Kasuga Smuggler***Benefit:** Students can select one Gaijin language, which they receive at no cost.

Since their founding, the Tortoise have kept the true purpose of their clan's founding a heavily guarded secret – after the Battle of White Stag, Agasha Kasuga spirited away a small group of gaijin and transported them out of the Empire to safety. Kasuga had managed to gather information on the gaijin, and established diplomatic relations with several gaijin cultures. The Hidden Dagger Dojo was founded by Agasha Kasuga himself to ensure that the clan's unspoken task would continue. Only the most skilled Tortoise Bushi train at the school and their studies focus on their abilities to move unseen and blend into crowds in both Rokugani cities and gaijin territories. The dojo has a significant collection of scrolls detailing the customs and practices of various gaijin cultures, as it is assumed that understanding an enemy is the first step in defeating him. The Hidden Dagger Dojo was originally located in secret tunnels deep beneath Otosan Uchi, but since the city was destroyed, the school has been relocated to East Hub City. (Updated from *Way of the Ninja*, p.64)

Yaoke Fusheru Dojo

School: Kasuga Bushi, Kasuga Smuggler*, Seppun Magistrate**Benefit:** Choose 1 Low Skill, you suffer no Honor loss when using this skill

Located on the tip of the northern peninsula bordering Golden Sun Bay, Yaoke Fusheru (Dawn Tower) is officially a Seppun outpost. However, the Imperials realize the loyalty and skills of the Tortoise Clan, and allow the Kasuga to control the lighthouse in the tower and the small port town nearby. Aside from a mid-sized barracks and a few storerooms, there is no traditional dojo building. Instead, Tortoise bushi train on the flat, open spaces that provide a panoramic view of both the sea and Golden Sun Bay. While Seppun Miharuru serve as sensei in the traditional martial arts, students are also instructed in the arts of sailing, commerce, and other practical tasks ignored by most Great Clan samurai. Tortoise samurai are taught that while honor is indeed fine, there will always be a need for someone trustworthy to get their hands dirty. (Updated from *Secrets of the Mantis*, p.73)

Hida Tango & Kalajel

(Note from the Editor: you will find the missing dojo from *Masters of War*, reprinted for your convenience, page 77, in the Smithy section)

Ancestors

In concordance with the *L5R Third Edition* ancestor rules published in *Masters of War*, here are some new ancestors' professions and drives.

Profession

Archer: Your ancestor was a peerless archer. Each of his arrows seemed to unerringly reach their mark. You gain one free rank in the Kyujutsu skill as well as a free Emphasis with one type of bow of your choice. This rank is added to any existing ranks, but may not increase your total Skill rank above 3.

Clan Champion: Your ancestor was a Clan Champion. He helped shape your Clan into what it is today. Choose one of your Traits, which must be either your family bonus Trait or your school's bonus Trait. Once made, your choice cannot be changed. Once per day, you can substitute another Trait for your chosen Trait when making a roll.

Clan Founder: Your ancestor was the founder of your Clan. You gain an extra Void Point per day that can only be used on a chosen school skill. Your Void Ring is also considered to be one higher (because of that extra Void Point) for any effect related to that skill (such as for the maximum amount of Raises that can be made or Techniques bonuses on that skill) but not when calculating Insight. Once made, your choice cannot be changed. This bonus cannot be increased with Devotion.

Merchant: Your ancestor was a rich merchant who had an incredible knack for making good deals. You gain one free rank in Commerce as well as the Appraise Emphasis. This rank is added to any existing ranks, but may not increase your total Skill rank above 3.

Philosopher: Your ancestor was a philosopher and pondered upon many of life's little lessons. You roll one extra die on all Storytelling and Etiquette (Conversation) rolls.

Pirate: Your ancestor was a wako; a pirate prowling the seas and waterways of Rokugan. You gain one rank in the Navigation skill with either the Sea or River Emphasis (your choice) for free. This rank is added to any existing ranks, but may not increase your total Skill rank above 3.

Scout: Your ancestor was a scout in his clan's armies. Once per day, you may spend a Void point to gain the Advantage Way of the Land for any area of the World you are currently in for a period of one day.

Seer: Your ancestor had the gift of prophecy which quickly made him famous. You gain a Free Raise on Divination.

Shugenja: Your ancestor was a famous or powerful shugenja. Choose one element. Once made, your choice is permanent. You gain a Free Raise when casting spells from that element. This bonus cannot be increased with

Devotion. This ancestor has no mechanical effect if taken by non-shugenja characters.

Smith: Your ancestor was a talented smith. He crafted items of such quality that he quickly became noticed by his lord. Choose one Craft skill that can grant you Glory (*L5R RPG 3E* p.188). You roll two extra dice on that skill.

Smuggler: Your ancestor was dabbling in semi-legal and illegal activities. Gain one rank in Commerce and one rank in Underworld. These ranks are added to any existing ranks, but may not increase your total Skill rank above 3. Devotion increase will grant one extra rank in one of these two skills, not both.

Spirit: Your ancestor was from a different spiritual realm and had close ties to the land in which a passage to his original realm existed. Choose one location (Kitsune Mori, Plains of Battle, Twilight Mountains, etc...). Once made, your choice is permanent. You roll one extra die on any actions you take while in this environment.

Sumotori: Your ancestor was a famous sumotori who eventually won the prestigious title of Yokozuna. You gain a Free Raise on any Jiu-jutsu skill roll.

Drive

Brashness: Your ancestor's brashness was legendary. Even though it helped him attaining greatness, it also cost him at times. You gain an extra Void Point per day to be spent on any Willpower rolls, with the exception of rolls made to keep your self-control.

Curiosity: Your ancestor's curiosity was legendary, always pushing him to discover new things, although it sometimes landed him in troubles. You roll and keep one additional die whenever you are attempting to break codes, detecting and disarming traps, or figuring out puzzles and riddles.

Forgiveness: Your ancestor saw the good inherent in any man regardless of their caste. You keep one extra die on any social dealings with heimin or hinin.

Glory: Your ancestor was obsessed with amassing glory. Whenever you spend a Void Point on a roll made for the purpose of gaining Glory, you gain a Free Raise on that roll (in addition to the usual benefits of Void use).

Piety: Your ancestor was completely devoted to the Fortunes (or one of them). This devotion was said to have granted you ancestor great wisdom as well as an inkling of divinity. Choose one element (this choice is permanent). Any hostile spell of that element cast on you has its TN increased by your Ring of the same element. Each time you increase this drive with Devotion, choose another element for which you will gain a similar bonus.

❖ The Smithy ❖

Quick-starting a game:
Insta-party and CFS

I am the Gamemaster of a campaign that has been going strong for nearly a year now. Prior to that, I was in a game group that had played L5R weekly for almost 10 years. I've played in some very stable and long lasting game groups which have had ample opportunity for long and satisfying campaigns that allow all the characters to mature and develop.

Most players aren't nearly as lucky as me however; many only get to play once in a great while. When this happens, a lot of time ends up being put into creating a character that will never be fully realized or given the chance to develop into what you have in mind, and as such a lot of that time is lost.

I present here another option. Here are pregenerated characters made to fit any group of up to 5 players. Characters can be omitted and/or designated as NPCs to fit your play group's needs. Included with each characters basic stats are a brief background as well as a few role-playing tips. At the end of this section, the Gamemaster will find an adventure written in the classic CFS format to get this party started on its way to greatness.

Characters

TOKU KOHEI

School/Rank: Toku Bushi 3

Air: 3 Earth: 4 Fire: 3 Water: 3 Void: 3
Perception: 4

Honor: 2.5 Status: 4.0 Glory: 3.0

Skills: Athletics 2, Defense 3, Hunting 3, Investigation (Interrogation, Notice, Search) 5, Kenjutsu (Katana) 3, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: History 2.

Advantages: Luck (2 ranks), Social Position.

Disadvantages: Overconfident, Small.

Kata: Striking as Earth, The Empire Rests on Its Edge, One Soul's Triumph.

Toku Kohei is a well kempt young man with a traditional topknot and a long thin mustache. He was the top bushi in his gempukku and as a result was offered a position as a magistrate for the young clan. Thinking he was the best option for the job, Kohei leapt at the opportunity and started work immediately. In his time

he has done an admirable job protecting the lands of his clan and tracking down and prosecuting the criminals that happen to cross his path. This has led to him feeling that he is untouchable to the extent that he will sometimes go charging into a known bad situation, forcing his partner, Toku Sayuri, to save him from himself. Kohei is an honorable samurai, but he is also quite sure of himself and his training, which leads him to be a bit overconfident in his interactions with others. He has made a name for himself within the Monkey Clan and everyone seems to have heard of him. It's hard to find anyone that knows of Toku Kohei that doesn't say he is destined to be an Emerald Magistrate, especially now that a Scorpion has taken the title of Emerald Champion. Of course, this is exactly as Kohei feels it should be. Toku Inao has hand-picked Kohei and his partner Sayuri to join with Tsi Xian Cho and their tracker Morito Tsuke to find and bring to justice a bandit that has been plaguing their lands over the winter.

Roleplaying Kohei: Pride. That is the word to remember when playing Kohei. He is a very prideful man and is well aware that he is completely in charge of this little group. If the others seem to forget that, it will not be long before he reminds them. He thinks that his skills are higher than they actually are and is almost arrogant in his belief that he can handle this entire mission on his own.

BAYUSHI SAYURI

School/Rank: Toku Bushi 2

Air: 2 Earth: 4 Fire: 3 Water: 2 Void: 3
Reflexes: 3 Agility: 4

Honor: 2.5 Status: 2.0 Glory: 2.0

Skills: Athletics 2, Defense 5, Hunting 1, Investigation (Search) 1, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: History 1.

Advantages: Quick, Strength of the Earth (4 points).

Disadvantages: Gullible, Bitter Betrothal (Bayushi Sochai).

Kata: Striking as Earth, Striking as Fire, One Soul's Triumph.

Bayushi Sayuri is an unassuming woman who is focused in fulfilling her duties to her clan, as illustrated by her political marriage to Bayushi Sochai, though she begins to question the validity of her current assignment. From early on she was paired up with Toku Kohei and tasked with protecting him from his overconfidence. He has talents as a magistrate but doesn't seem to recognize

his own limitations, and Sayuri's superiors understand that only someone as level headed and clear thinking as Sayuri can keep him around long enough to help put the Monkey Clan in the best position possible. She accepts her duty as stolidly as any samurai would, but she resents it. She does not understand why she cannot fight directly for her clan instead of pulling someone like Kohei out of all the sticky situations his recklessness puts him in. She hopes that this new quest will lead to a new assignment, and soon she can part ways with her charge and start fighting as Bayushi Sayuri, bushi of the Scorpion Clan, and not protector of the Hope of the Monkey.

Roleplaying Sayuri: This young samurai-ko is something strange to behold. She wears the colors of the Scorpion, has the heart of a Lion, but the soul of a Monkey. She will fight until her last breath for the Monkey Clan and will not allow her actions to harm it. Sayuri is a clueless liability in any court setting: she can fight, but in a social situation she has no idea what to do. She will listen to what anyone has to say and believe it at face value. Gullible is hardly the word for it.

TSI XIAN CHO

School/Rank: Tsi Smith/Oriole Craftsman

Air: 2	Earth: 3	Fire: 4	Water: 2	Void: 3
Reflexes: 3		Intelligence: 5	Strength: 3	
Honor: 2.5	Status: 2.0		Glory: 2.0	

Skills: Craft: Armorsmithing 3, Craft: Weaponsmithing (Katana, Wakizashi) 7, Hunting 2, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Lore: Weapons (Katana) 3.

Advantages: Great Potential (Craft: Weaponsmithing).

Disadvantages: Antisocial (2 points), Benten's Curse, Fascination (smithing).

Kata: Striking as Fire, The Empire Rests on It's Edge.

The Oriole Clan has not been around for long and is the youngest clan in existence. As a result of their recent formation, the daimyo, Tsi Zutaka, is desperately trying to put his clan on the same footing as the many others. He is forcing some of his most prominent students to start seeing the empire, hoping that they will learn more of what it means to be a clan samurai in Rokugan and hopefully learn the skills it will take to lead the Oriole into the future. Xian Cho is probably the most promising of Zutaka's students and seems to have a remarkable aptitude for smithing. Unfortunately, that is his all encompassing passion and he ignores all else for learning more about and practicing his craft. Zutaka has decided that Xian Cho needs to get as far away from the forge as possible and be forced to learn more about what else is available to him. As a result, Zutaka called in one of his outstanding favors to place his student in the hands of the Monkey Clan. Xian Cho has long black hair that he keeps tied neatly at all times, and is completely clean shaven. He is not large but there is obvious strength and power in his arms and frame. Although he is generally an amiable man he does not care for the social scene and that added to the fact that he resents his current position leads to a somewhat surly demeanor on most occasions.

Roleplaying Xian Cho: If at all possible, Xian Cho is alone. He will find any and every opportunity to be alone. Either sketching out new ideas or possibly even making notes for his next project. He is very protective of his notes and sketches and will not discuss them unless very kindly coerced. He is generally distrustful of everyone and will usually make his distrust apparent.

MORITO TSUKE

School/Rank: Woodland Tracker/Morito Bushi 1

Air: 2	Earth: 3	Fire: 3	Water: 3	Void: 3
Reflexes: 3			Perception: 4	
Honor: 2.5	Status: 2.0		Glory: 2.0	

Skills: Athletics 1, Defense 3, Horsemanship 5, Hunting (Trailblazing, Tracking, Survival) 6, Kenjutsu 2, Kyujutsu 3, Medicine (Herbalism) 2, Stealth 1.

Advantages: Absolute Direction, Way of the Land (Monkey and Scorpion).

Disadvantages: Greedy, Lechery (2 points).

Kata: Striking as Earth, Striking as Fire.

Like the Oriole, the Ox are always trying to make a name for themselves and fund their clan as a whole. They do this in many ways, by selling the Ox clan steeds that they breed, by offering their services as caravan masters, trackers or guides throughout the Empire. This is how Morito Tsuke was introduced into this motley group. He has been paid a handsome sum to lead the other three in tracking down the criminal that they are looking for. Not much is known about Tsuke himself, except that he comes with high recommendation from the Monkey's contact within the Ox. Tsuke is again a very quiet person who is obviously at home in the wilderness and enjoys it very much. His hair is kept cut short, and he always keeps a beard.

Roleplaying Tsuke: He is a very careful person and always takes the time to think through every situation before offering an answer to a question or making a decision. He does not tend to offer up his thoughts unless asked, and then he will explain the details of his ideas completely. Though Tsuke is a quiet man he does tend to be a bit of a leech and he is quite taken by the beauty of Bayushi Sayuri.

TONBO OTSUKI

School/Rank: Tonbo Shugenja 2

Air: 3	Earth: 2	Fire: 2	Water: 4	Void: 3
	Stamina: 3	Intelligence: 4		
Honor 2.0	Status 2.0		Glory 2.0	

Skills: Calligraphy 2, Courtier 2, Divination 2, Etiquette 3, Lore: History 1, Lore: Monkey Clan 1, Meditation (Zanji) 3, Medicine 3, Spears (Yari) 3, Spellcraft 5.

Advantages: Clear Thinker, Friendly Kami, Sage.

Disadvantages: Compulsion: Learn (4), Soft-Hearted.

Spells: Sense*, Commune*, Summon*, By the Light of Lady Moon, Quiescence of Air*, Secrets on the Wind, Earth's Stagnation, Heart of Nature, Path to Inner Peace, Reflections of Pan Ku, Wisdom and Clarity* (* denotes spells known as Innate Abilities)

Tonbo Otsuki is a sheltered and garrulous young man. He has grown up in the libraries of the Dragonfly, Phoenix, and Dragon Clans. Through his years, he has made a name for himself as a very knowledgeable spell-caster, and a man who knows a small amount of nearly any subject. He has yet to be introduced to the Empire at large, and this is his first time outside of the comforts of his familiar scrolls. The writings at his disposal are almost exhausted and his thirst for knowledge has pushed him beyond the Dragonfly borders. Monkey Clan lands called to him with their remarkable access to the Imperial libraries and Otsuki hoped to use that relationship to access untold scrolls and writings. Toku Inao has offered him a chance to study there if he will do her a small favor...

Roleplaying Otsuki: Quite simply, Otsuki is a nerd; your quintessential nerd. He will usually be reading a scroll, making notes, mumbling and talking to himself, or trying to talk to someone about something he has learned. He is eager to teach his knowledge as well as learn more. He has a few strange repetitive quirks such as his tendency to constantly roll and unroll scrolls when he is nervous, he generally will place his hands inside the folds of his kimono when he is talking about something he is sincere about, and he also gets very antsy and can barely restrain himself when an opportunity to learn more presents itself.

Challenge Focus Strike

Challenge

All of the party members are brought before Toku Inao the Monkey Clan daimyo, and given charge, under the leadership of Toku Kohei, of tracking down and bringing to justice a bandit that recently fouled the paddies of one of the rice farms of the clan. It is obvious from her tone that should they succeed great glory will be heaped upon them.

Focus

The bandit leads the party all across Monkey lands and into Scorpion lands. The Scorpion will write travel papers for the party and allow them access to their lands but only to pursue their bandit and only as long as citizens in their lands are not bothered. Unfortunately all of this takes time and leads to the trail going cold. The party has to find a way to reawaken the trail and find their bandit. The Scorpion, as usual are happy to help... for a price.

Strike

The bandit in question is in fact a resident of the bandit city of Shutai located within Scorpion lands. Now they will have to not only find a way to apprehend a criminal in the midst of a den of criminals or lure him out, but also not offend their Scorpion neighbors and allies.

Akodo Harubi



Masters of War Missing Dojo

Several Dojo were missing from the printing of Masters of War. For your convenience, we reprint here the information about the missing dojo given on l5r.com.

Kaiu Engineering Academy (Crab)

Location: Kaiu Shiro

Schools: Kaiu Engineer, Falcon's Wings

Benefit: You gain a bonus to all Engineering Skill Rolls equal to your Intelligence.

Sharp Eye Dojo (Crab)

Location: Valley of the Spirits

Schools: Hida Bushi, Hiruma Scout, Toritaka Bushi, Falcon's Strike

Benefit: You gain a bonus equal to half your Perception (rounding down) on all ranged attack rolls.

Iuchi Scout Dojo (Unicorn)

Location: Shiro Iuchi

Schools: Iuchi Scout, Master of Winds

Benefit: Students of Iuchi Scout Dojo gain a bonus of +1k0 to all Perception-based rolls.

Shiro Utaku Shojo (Unicorn)

Location: Shiro Utaku

Schools: Utaku Battle Maiden

Benefit: When fighting from horseback, students of Shiro Utaku Shojo gain a bonus to melee damage equal to their Utaku Battle Maiden School Rank.

Utaku Infantry Dojo (Unicorn)

Location: Shiro Utaku

Schools: Utaku Infantry, Junghar Defender

Benefit: When fighting with their specialized weapon, students of the Utaku Infantry Dojo gain a bonus to their damage rolls equal to their Utaku Infantry School Rank.

❖ The Theater ❖

Sparrow Song

Somewhere near Kyuden Suzume, spring of the year 852

Suzume Kaiseko sat on her heels in her most resplendent kimono, waiting for her tutor to call her inside. She had eagerly looked around at her surroundings when they had first arrived here, rejuvenating from the long winter spent inside while observing the land itself recovering - because even the Suzume lands, sparse as they were, were still beautiful in spring - but with every minute that her tutor spent inside the small building, she started feeling more agitated.

It was the day of her *gempukku*, after all, and today she would show a selection of Suzume storytellers - and unsuspecting guests of her daimyo, Kaiseko had been made to understand - how she had been trained in the fine arts. Her elder brother, a samurai serving in the House Guard, had told her a Kakita was at the Castle, and who better to judge her artisan skills than one such? Her heart had skipped a beat when she had first heard that, and even now still fluttered a mite, for even though she was confident in her art - more confident than in her bushi skills, to be sure - Kakita breathe stories.

"Enter, child," her tutor called to her in his most commanding tone; not unkind, but not the sheltering tones he had used when teaching her, either. With trembling knees and trepidation in her heart, she went through the archway inside the small pavilion. Once there, she saw two men and a woman sitting on cushions behind a small table, with her tutor hovering nearby, clearly also somewhat nervous on her behalf. Two of her judges she knew, Suzume Kaishaku and Suzume Doshiko, two of the venerable elder of the Clan; the third, dressed in a beautiful red kimono was named Crane by his bleached white hair. She had to stifle a gasp, for that last was easily the most handsome man she had ever seen. One deep breath and a sincere wish that she was not blushing later, she calmed herself. She had prepared herself well, with a story she knew would be well-appreciated by a Crane. There would be no hurdle, there would be no mistakes.

Trying her best to be one with her story, putting all thoughts of the others present out of her mind, she launched into her story.

And Kaiseko spoke...

Once upon a time, long before the Kami descended from the Celestial Heavens to guide our ways, there lived a crane on one of the small peaks of the mountain range later named the Seikitsu Mountains. She lived in a simple cottage, which stood all alone next to a river's spring, in the midst of a clearing in a small grove, and in that cottage, she spent her days sculpting wood into images of the Fortunes. That was her only craft, but one she excelled at. From all over the land, people came to that clearing to admire her carvings, and mighty lords offered her fortunes of rice in exchange for a single one of those sculptures. But she denied any and all offers, claiming those idols were from that land and belonged to that land. And so she stayed in poverty amidst her art, living from what the land gave to her.



In a city not very far from that grove, a man named Sanzo held his court. He was a grand lord, this Sanzo, a good man to his subjects, who loved sharing his considerable wealth with people who had less than him. Looking at his beautiful mansion, with its two floors full of shoji screens and wooden paneling covered in intricate designs painted with much love and care by his wives and daughters, he felt ashamed that he had so much, while Crane had to live so sparsely in the mountains. Thus he sent a message to Crane to ask her if she would not come and live in the city, and he offered to build a house for her next to his mansion, so that she could leave near him and her art would be more easily accessible for all those who wished to see and pray to them.

The messenger, tired from the long walk to the mountaintop, waited until Crane had read the message, and then gave Crane his master's gift—a great basket of rice, enough to sustain Crane for a long time. "I cannot accept this," Crane said in answer to Lord Sanzo's largesse. "Thank your master for his magnanimous gift, but there are plenty who have more of a need for this, both the gift of rice and the gift of lodgings." This was before the Lady Doji had taught us the heavenly arts of the court, and with the gift so once refused, the messenger bowed and prepared to bring Crane's reply back to his master, who would surely be angered at the refusal.

When Crane saw the messenger's apprehension, she added "Tell your master that I will remember him in my prayers, for he is a great and generous man." It must be said that the shrine Crane had built for her ancestors and the Fortunes was the most beautiful in all the lands of Rokugan in those days, and prayers offered in the shrine went straight to the Celestial Heavens. Such a gift as Crane offered his master would surely appease Lord Sanzo. Thus reassured, the messenger started his long walk back to the city.

Kakita Doshi watched the girl perform without a trace of uncertainty, not a single trace of doubt, and he was moved. She had chosen a wise subject, he noted, and told a strong tale. With difficulty he tore away his gaze from the young Sparrow and watched her tutor for a sign that he had made this story for her. Judging by the older Suzume's expression, it was clear that the girl had crafted the tale herself, and that her teacher was likewise impressed with his pupil. *Former pupil*, Doshi reflected, for she would surely fulfill the requirements for her gempukku with this story.

Once more, Lord Sanzo sent his trusted servant to Crane's mountain lodge, and now he bore a heavier burden. Crane saw him struggle with the heavy straw basket he was carrying, and when the servant came to the entrance of her house, she was ready there to greet him and offer him cool tea and a seating in the shade. Honor-bound the servant declined, and delivered his master's second invitation.

Crane opened the *bundori* basket and within, she saw the heads of Lion, Crab and Scorpion, her three greatest enemies. Without pause, Crane told the messenger to thank his master for this majestic, kingly gift, but answered once more that she could not join Lord Sanzo, out of fear that in the city the kami of rock and tree, brook and cloud, the kami that brought her inspiration and made her poor carvings come to life, would abandon her.

When the servant was long gone again, refreshed for the long road home, Crane dug a great pit in front of the shrine to her ancestors and buried the three heads with all honors and rites, and she wept for a long time before drying her tears and returning to her work, the wooden carvings of the kami that slowly consumed her, her passions and energy draining into the statues that, in the right light, seemed to move and live themselves.

Her eyes, which had been downcast during the earlier parts of the story, now rested only on him, Doshi noted, as if all people in the room had turned to smoke except she and him. And where she had, at first sight, looked plain and simple as a typical Suzume, now with the fire of her storyteller's spirit putting a blush on her face and a sparkle in her eyes, she suddenly was beautiful, even radiant.

Lord Sanzo was enraged now. He had offered her a year's yield, and brought her the heads of her enemies, and yet she would not abandon her life of abject poverty to live near him. It was an insult, and he had already heard how the other lords mocked him, that even a lowly artist living in his lands could easily naysay his wishes and live. He summoned his strongest and heartiest samurai and marched from his city to the mountains, his servant walking next to him, carrying his lord's final gift.

Crane watched the war-party approach her home, as she had known they would. Lord Sanzo came out of his palanquin and without talking to Crane, ordered his men to destroy the shack. The samurai drew blades and entered the house as servants of the great lord brought forth twigs and branches and stacked them next to the hovel. From inside came the sounds of destruction as Sanzo's vassals hacked the fabled carvings to pieces. Eventually, their hunger for devastation stilled, they left the hovel and the lead swordsman lighted the piled stacks of wood.

And mere yards from Sanzo, Crane watched how her home burned, and how all her works of art and industry were destroyed, their remnants eagerly consumed by the licking flames. Together, the high lord and the artisan watched as the building succumbed, and remained motionless and silent there until only ashes were left.

Lord Sanzo spoke, "Now that everything that ties you here, everything you hold dear is gone, will you now come and live in my city?"

Crane merely shook her head, no emotion on her face except pity for the brutes ruining her life's work. Enraged, Sanzo drew his blade from the saya his faithful servant had carried all the while, and struck her down. Then, he ordered his men to return to the city.

When his men were gone, he whispered a single word, "Why?"

But Crane, her life blood gushing out of her wound, spoke no more, and Sanzo walked away, sunken in deep thought.

*Respectful silence
Cranes mourn their fallen sister
A great artist slain*

After Sanzo was gone, Crane crawled to her splendid shrine which not even Sanzo's most brutish enforcers had dared defile, and spent her last moments praying the kami, asking them forgiveness for Sanzo—her blood spilling over the most vivid and beautiful of her creations, the ones she had bled for while creating them, the ones she had made with her own bare hands, not at her own volition but at that of the grove that compelled and completed her.

That night, the city of Lord Sanzo burned, devastated by great and unheard of creatures, terrifying in their unearthly beauty. None could stand and face them, the few faithful samurai that tried were slain in mere heartbeats, and mighty shugenja went mad as the kami turned on them. Their self-imposed task done, the beings departed, never to return or to be seen again, leaving behind only the ruined husk of a once-affluent city.

Ever since then, the grove where Crane had once lived was shunned by most men, except the most righteous who would go and pray to her to grant them her blessings of compassion and creation. Arriving at the shrine at the end of their pilgrimage, they would be met by a single monk tending to the place, who would only go by the name Sanzo and would take no gifts from any visitor, living only from what the land gave him. And for centuries, there would always be but one monk at the shrine, until at last there was no worthy successor and the shrine was forgotten, only to be found again from times to times, when lost and wandering travelers would stumble onto it, and marvel at the beauty and serenity of their discovery—never to find it a second time, even when they carefully marked their way when leaving.

The land would ever be there to bestow her gifts on those that beseeched her, but never again would she let herself be despoiled by a tyrant's hand.

That was the lesson Crane taught Sanzo.



That is the lesson the land, the kami, every rustling leaf, every murmuring brook, every stalk of rice tries to teach us, every day anew.

Kaiseko bowed to her judges after finishing her story and left the room. And a long, thoughtful silence filled the room afterwards.

The gardens of Kyuden Suzume, later that evening

Making sure nobody had seen her, Kaiseko had made her way through the modest castle of the Sparrow. From here in the gardens, the sounds of the gempukku celebrations that were still going strong were thankfully muffled—*nothing*, Kaiseko decided, *made as much noise as samurai indulging in great quantities of sake*. Her absence would not be swiftly noticed, she hoped, and when she had seen Doshi leave for the gardens, she had stood up and hurried for the doors.

Now where had he gone?, she pondered. Taking a random turn in the garden's maze, she tried to proceed as silently as possible so as to hear the sounds of her Crane prey. And then something moved in the darkness—she could barely contain the scream that jumped to her throat—and what had seemed to be a shrub turned into the Kakita, who walked to confront her.

"You may be samurai now," he chided her, "but still if your superiors find out you were out here with me without a chaperone nearby, they will punish you." He stopped walking to her, staying at a tactful distance from her.

"I know", she pleaded demurely, cheeks reddening as she blushed from his berating tone, "but I saw you leave for the gardens and some fresh air, and knew I had to talk to you. I had to come and join you here, far away from my relatives." She lowered her eyes, knowing she was overstepping major boundaries of protocol and decent behavior here, yet continued "It is not often that someone with true refinement visits our poor lands, my lord." Almost unnoticeable, in a few small, gliding steps, she halved the respectful distance between him and her.

She can very well imitate the look of a castigated lady, Doshi thought, but she most certainly does not feel any remorse for being here, and cannot keep that out of her voice. She will need to learn more of sincerity before she can come to court, but if she ever does—what a magnificent power she could become, and what glory to the one introducing her!

"Your tale," he said, changing subjects and inviting her to follow him on a small walk through the maze. "You wrote it yourself, did you not? I am intrigued if there was more to it than my first hearing could conjure."

"Was there any significance to my poor narrative, Kakita-sama? Maybe only what significance the listener gives to it." She pretended to mull over that question, while mentally rearranging one last time the answer she had carefully composed already—and catching up

to the graceful nobleman, her long legs easily matching his strides. Only now that they finally stood next to each other did Doshi notice that they were of a like height, and only seemed to be like the small and fragile bird that was her family's namesake because she usually affected a reserved and detached behavior in company.

"No more significance, to be sure, than that we... however humble, however elevated... were all like the Crane from the tale once", came Kaiseko's answer. "Whether we're gentle, highborn Crane or diligent, hard-working Sparrows harvesting the fields, we all share the same blood of the Lady Doji—with the virtues that come with that blood." Kaiseko felt herself slip into her storyteller persona, the words coming to life as she uttered them. "Sometimes, instead of merely being thankful of such worthy ancestry, we should reflect back on our origins, and be thankful of our elevation over where we came from. Over what we could have been, but for the grace of our Clans' common Ancestor."

This turn of the discussion shows her true spirit again, Doshi saw, and the true fire of her Heart. Her talent will be wasted here, at the rural court of the Suzume, if somebody does not rescue her from this fate. It would be something worth discussing with the Sparrow daimyo on the next day's talks, he decided.

Together, sometimes talking but more often simply enjoying each other's companionship, they walked through the gardens until the rose-and-golden light of the Lady Amaterasu rising over the horizon guided them back to the Castle.

Kris Van Beurden

Characters

SUZUME KAISEKO

"Kindness is criticism in disguise."

Clan/School/Rank: Sparrow Clan Suzume Bushi 1
Insight: 147

Earth: 3	Water: 2	Fire: 2	Air: 3	Void: 3
Agility: 3				
Honor: 3.5		Glory: 2.0		Status: 1.0

Skills: Calligraphy 2, Etiquette 3, Kenjutsu (Katana) 3, Lore: History 1, Performance: Storytelling 3, Storytelling (Bragging, Oratory, Rhetoric) 3, Theology 2.

Advantages: Voice

Disadvantages: True Love (Kakita Doshi), Soft Hearted.

Kata: N/A

KAKITA DOSHI

"A patient man learns quickly. An impatient man, not at all."

Clan/School/Rank: Crane Clan Kakita Bushi 2
Insight: 176

Earth: 2	Water: 2	Fire: 3	Air: 4	Void: 4
Agility: 4				
Honor: 4.5		Glory: 4.0		Status: 1.0

Skills: Etiquette (Sincerity) 3, Horsemanship 3, Iaijutsu 5, Kenjutsu (Katana) 4, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Heraldry 2, Meditation 2, Storytelling (Poetry) 2.

Advantages: Benten's Blessing, Quick.

Disadvantages: N/A

Kata: Kakita's First Stance



Devotion

With the same slow, elegant grace in which it had grown, the maple leaf floated through the air, down toward the gentle stream running softly below. It knew that there was a time to die and a time to be reborn, such was the way of kharma. It landed gently on the water, and began its new journey.

Usually the soft gurgling of the stream soothed her, but not this morning. Shudo Kagumi struggled to breathe. "I am so sorry for keeping you," Her chest felt like it had been filled with ice-cold water. "I felt obliged to personally bid you farewell".

She stared into the back of the other samurai-ko. The sun slowly rising in front of her, she could only make out her silhouette, framed by two trees. The armor made the black figure seem much more masculine than Kagumi.

"I thought we had agreed not to talk again, Shudo-san" replied the dark shape.

"I know that, Imoko, but I just..."

"Do not call me that, Shudo. We agreed that it is no longer acceptable."

The silence that followed was heavy. Only the soft gurgling of the stream could be heard, the water rippling over the rocks. Kagumi's eyes began to burn, and a single drop ran down her cheek.

"If you do not mind, I will take my leave now" the voice of the dark shape seemed to falter on the last word. "may the fortunes keep you well, Kagumi-chan." For the time of an heartbeat, the samurai-ko stared at the horizon, and then confidently began to stride toward it.

Kagumi took a step forward, and fighting hard to melt the icy lump in her throat with pure force of will. "Don't go Imoko! Please, please..." Her strength waned again, and she collapsed, kneeling on the pine needles carpeting the forest. Their sweet smell was of little comfort. Kagumi simply could not be strong anymore. The tears ran freely now. The bushi turned around. "Kag... Kagumi. I have to join Yoritomo's men, you know this. It is my duty, and cannot be changed. I have to dedicate all my attention to this, or I will surely fail. Let the past be the past."

It broke Kitsune Imoko's heart to see Kagumi in such a state, but it had to come to this. It was her kharma

that she would eventually have to go and fight. To be taken seriously in the military, certain sacrifices had to be made. A single sunbeam pierced through the canopy of the trees, enveloping the weeping girl in a column of light. The sight of the weeping girl devastated Imoko. She slowly paced down toward Kagumi, and planted her naginata in front of her. "I am sorry," she said.

"But all the things we said, all the plans we had made! You have betrayed me, Imoko, you promised it would last forever!"

A loud clap reverberated through the forest, scattering the birds who had been silent up until now. Sounding like a pinecone falling and scattering on the rocks below, it was the sound of a palm striking a cheek. "Do not come to me with childish accusations! This is the way of life, Kagumi, and it is time you learn it!"

Kagumi's face was burning "but... I love y..."

"Quiet!" Imoko's face was ablaze with scorn. "I will take my leave now," she said coldly.

Imoko turned on her heels, climbed over the moss-covered stones, and was back on her original vantage point. "Fortunes keep you well, Shudo-san," she said, not looking back at Kagumi.

A cloud had moved and hid the sun. The girl by the stream, now in the shadows of the trees, watched her disappear, gone to join the armies of the Alliance. Her body wracked under uncontrollable sadness, and she threw herself on the forest floor, her tears seeping into the rich soil.

Walking into a golden horizon, the sun made a single golden drop shine on Kitsune Imoko's face, her lips mouthing five words. "I love you too, Kagumi-chan."

Tokkie



Challenge, Focus, Strike

Minor Clans, Major Problems

Introduction

These CFS scenarios can be run individually, or combined into a much longer adventure. Despite their names, they can be played in any order desired. They take place in a small town that has few Great Clan residents. Hanami Mura, Kudo, or another area where Minor Clan members congregate would be suitable. If you have no location in mind, you can simply call the town "Isa Ichi," with a Dragon governor named Chikayasu in charge.

The entire affair begins when the PCs are asked by the provincial governor to pay a visit to some of the more influential residents of the area and make sure that they are well disposed towards him. If the PCs ask around, they may learn that the governor is worried that he may have to impose new taxes next harvest season, and wants to gain the good graces of those he governs before considering such an unpopular political move.

The town the PCs are asked to visit is notable in that all of the major holdings are overseen by members of Minor Clans. Representatives from six different Minor Clans live in the town in total, each looking after their individual interests. In most cases, the different families have little to do with each other, but the provincial governor hopes that they can all be convinced to lend him their support in the coming months.

That all depends, of course, on the PCs.

Act One: The Party

Challenge

The provincial governor asks the PCs to visit his old and dear friend Suzume Yorokobi and lend him any assistance they can. Not only is Yorokobi one of the governor's most ardent political supporters, but he is also known and respected throughout a number of different social circles. As such, it is in the governor's best interests both professionally and privately to maintain a good relationship with his friend.

Focus

When the PCs reach Yorokobi's home they find it abuzz with activity. Scribes bustle to and fro, delivering missives and returning with replies. Servants busy themselves with cleaning, sweeping, washing, and shining every part of the household. Merchants arrive with deliveries or requests for payment. The entire estate is in chaos, and in order to speak with Yorokobi the PCs will have to reach the center of all the activity.

Strike

When they finally do reach him, Yorokobi greets the PCs warmly, taking a short break from his labors to receive them. He apologizes for the mess, explaining that he is in the middle of organizing a party to celebrate the birth of his third son. In fact, he adds, they just might be able to help him. He'd like to retain the services of the renowned dancer Tonbo Mai, but doesn't have the time to go and ask her himself. He wonders if the PCs, acting on behalf of the governor as they are, might be able to go in his stead.

Unfortunately, Tonbo Mai is having difficulties of her own, and cannot provide entertainment for Yorokobi's party until she is able to put her own household in order.

Act Two: The Ghost

Challenge

The PCs are asked to visit the dance academy of Tonbo Mai and make sure that everything is in order. While Mai's school has long brought both wealth and prestige to the province, recently the number of students attending classes there has dropped off significantly. The governor would like to know if there is anything he can to help Mai deal with this problem.

Focus

Mai is visibly stressed when she meets the PCs, her beauty marred by dark circles under her eyes and a somber expression. Although she is hesitant to confide in the PCs at first, she eventually opens up and tells them the source of her troubles. Her dance school has recently become haunted by some kind of spirit. It seems to have some sort of deep connection with the place, as all attempts to drive it away have so far failed. Instead, the ghost has ended up driving away students.

Strike

The ghost has appeared because he wants to give Mai an important message. She is in the process of trying to sell one of the family's old warehouses. What she doesn't know is that her dead father, Tonbo Wakare, stored a number of important heirlooms in a secret chamber in that very warehouse. He has returned to try and tell her this, but cannot make himself understood. Learning the location of the treasure would benefit Mai greatly, but first the PCs must find some way to identify the ghost and communicate with him. To complicate matters even further, Tonbo Wakare is a very traditional member of his Clan, and will not speak to any members of the Lion Clan. Another source of spiritual expertise will have to be found.

*Act Three: The Scandal***Challenge**

Komori Ijime (or Toritaka Ijime if you are playing before the formation of the Bat Clan), has refused to leave his home or receive any guests. As Ijime is the official spiritual advisor for all civic affairs in the area, this has caused quite a problem. Although the governor could simply order Ijime to attend to his duties, he would rather not cause such a drastic loss of face, and asks the PCs to see if they can somehow remedy the situation.

Focus

Ijime only agrees to meet with the PCs after learning that they have been sent by the governor himself, and even then hides behind a fan most of the time. He claims that his honor has been besmirched by the insults that Ichiro Tsuyoshi leveled against him, and cannot bear to face the ridicule and scorn that await him if he ventures outside. Evidently Tsuyoshi said that Ijime's paintings, which represent the denizens of the spirit world, were "as artistic as the scrawlings of an infant." Ijime, on the other hand, claims that his art is inspired by his talent as a shugenja, and says that he will only be satisfied with a public apology from Tsuyoshi. Until he receives one, he intends to continue living as a recluse.

Strike

If the PCs track down Tsuyoshi, they'll find him more than willing to recant his earlier words. He is a practical man, and cares little for politics. If a public apology will appease Ijime, he'll swallow his pride for the sake of greater good and give one. Before he can do that, however, he'll have to go back to town. He's in the middle of the woods, and there's just one thing he needs to do before he can leave.

*Act Four: The Hunt***Challenge**

The PCs are recruited by the provincial governor to help Ichiro Tsuyoshi hunt down a monster that has been

attacking travelers and woodcutters in the woods. The beast is called the Kamaitachi. It moves like the wind itself, and can slash at its victims with its sharp claws before they even know it is there. Not only is Tsuyoshi interested in making the woods safe, but he sees it as a point of personal pride to rid the area of the monster. As a Badger, he intends to defeat the Kamaitachi with strength of arms alone, and refuses any magical aid.

Focus

Eventually Tsuyoshi manages to corner the Kamaitachi in a gulley, blocking the mouth so that it is unable to leave. When he moves forward to engage the monster in battle, however, he finds he is unable to inflict any damage. No matter what weapon or tactic he tries, the Kamaitachi appears unharmed.

A scholar in the hunting party suggests that it's possible that weapons made of copper may be able to hurt the Kamaitachi, as that metal has been effective against other creatures with a strong affinity to the air.

Strike

There is a smith in town that can craft weapons such as the ones Tsuyoshi requires. But if the PCs are not quick in reaching the smith the Kamaitachi may escape and they will be forced to start their hunt all over again.

To make matters even worse, the smith has issues of his own that he will need to address before he can find the copper necessary to create the weapons requested.

*Act Five: The Forge***Challenge**

The provincial governor asks the PCs to visit the forge and shop of Tsi Hanwei (or Moshi Hanwei if you are playing before the formation of the Oriole Clan) and inquire about the viability of his business. Hanwei has paid very little in taxes over the past few years, and it is possible that his holdings will be given to someone who can manage them better if he does not reverse this trend.

Focus

Hanwei's forge has indeed seen better days. Although his skill in creating and blessing weapons is unmatched in the province, he has had only a few customers recently. A big part of this lies in the fact that his confidence has been shaken by this run of bad business, which led him to spend more time drinking than working. So that he found fewer customers. So he spent more time drinking. It has gotten to the point where the vicious circle is on the verge of ruining him. Even his tools are beginning to show signs of age, as he has not been able to replace them.

Strike

If the PCs can convince Hanwei to become more serious about maintaining his forge and seeking out customers there is no limit to the number of wondrous items he can create. Unfortunately, not only do they need to give him the motivation to turn his life around, but

they also need to find him some new tools, some better ore, and possibly even a whole anvil.

There is a merchant from the Tortoise Clan in town who could definitely get Hanwei what he needs. But he's not likely to do so without getting something valuable in return.

Act Six: The Moneylender

Challenge

The PCs are asked by the provincial governor to visit a local merchant named Kasuga Sekoi on behalf of a group of local craftsmen and artisans. The craftsmen would like to purchase a large quantity of tools and materials from Sekoi but they do not currently have the funds necessary to pay. They hope that the PCs, who are more versed in the art of diplomacy than they, will be able to convince Sekoi to let them defer payment until later. Furthermore, the governor hopes that Sekoi will see the request as a sign that the area is about to see an increase in economic activity and continue to do business there.

Focus

Sekoi has exactly what the craftsmen require, and it would cost him relatively little to part with such a small part of his total stock. Indeed, Sekoi is quite rich, and has just about everything money can buy. But a smart merchant like him never gives away something for nothing, and if the PCs talk to him they will find that what Sekoi wants is something that money cannot buy.

Strike

Despite his wealth, Sekoi has little in the way of political connections. All of his time bartering and haggling has left him with no time for socializing and a reputation as somewhat of a bully. He'd like to change that by getting out into the public eye more, and asks the PCs for a favor. He understands that Suzume Yorokobi will soon be holding a grand party. If the PCs can get him an invitation to that party, he'd be more than happy to let the artisans and craftsmen have anything they need for free.

Of course, Yorokobi has his own problems to deal with before his party can proceed...

Interlude: The Traveler

Challenge

While they are going about their business in town, the PCs come across a samurai being beat up by a group of ronin thugs in an alley. He is Toku Hansuke (or Usagi Hansuke if you are playing before the formation of the Monkey Clan), and the ronin are exacting revenge for his failure to pay a gambling debt. If the PCs move to help him, the drunken ronin turn to take their frustration on the party. If the PCs show no sign of interfering, the ronin catch sight of them and run away. In either case, Hansuke thanks the PCs profusely and places himself in their debt.

Once the PCs get a closer look at him they may notice that the saya in Hansuke's belt is empty. Though he is a samurai, he bears no sword.

Focus

Hansuke will help the PCs in any way they ask during their stay in town, and can be a loyal ally if called upon. He will run errands, seek out information, or help in any other way he can.

If the PCs think to ask him his story, they are met with a tale of misfortune and woe. Hansuke is on a musha shugyo, with a mission to find and recover a lost scroll that belongs to his family. Although he managed to narrow down the last known location of the scroll to somewhere in town, his search hit a dead end soon after he arrived. Desperate and hungry, he put his sword up as collateral for a loan. When that money ran out, he turned to gambling in the hope that he could win enough for a meal. Instead, he lost, and got beaten up when he couldn't pay what he owed.

Strike

Hansuke has vowed not to return home until he has recovered the scroll. Ijime may be able to help with that if he can be convinced to return to his duties. But he'll also need to find a job and earn enough to pay back the money he borrowed from Sekoi to get his sword. Perhaps he can serve as an assistant to Hanwei or Yorokobi. And though Hansuke would never admit it openly, those who are especially observant may notice a certain brightness in his eyes whenever the topic of conversation turns to Tonbo Mai. It is possible that once Hansuke has completed his mission he may return to seek a wife. If so, he would show a great deal of gratitude to anyone who helped him during his hour of need.

Conclusion

Any individuals whose problems the PCs have helped solve are certain to hold them in high esteem. Maintaining a respectful and diplomatic demeanor in the face of such difficulties will only increase the level of recognition the PCs receive. Parties who lent aid to each of the major households in the town with courtesy and decorum may even find themselves hailed as local heroes. Additionally, the provincial governor may wish to bestow gifts and recognition upon them as well, provided they have succeeded in ensuring that everyone is happy with his leadership. Word of the PCs' skill as problem solvers and "respected friends of the Minor Clans" may spread to other areas, and they may find themselves called upon to perform other deeds for both figures of status and others among the Minor Clans. All in all, they stand to receive a great deal, both in terms of gratitude for what they have done and future opportunities for service.

Isawa Nazomitsu

CFS

*Away from the Eyes of the Phoenix***Challenge**

Shortly after the Phoenix take over the Imperial City, the PCs are approached by the Dragonfly chief diplomat at the Embassy of the Alliance of Minor Clans. She wants to hire the PCs to escort a man now residing in the Embassy out of Toshi Ranbo and to Kyuden Tonbo. However, this must be done so that the Phoenix, who now control the city and its gates, are unaware of that man ever having been in the city, let alone that he has left it. Additionally, it is best if the PCs, while escorting the man avoid both the lands of the Lion, and the lands of the Phoenix. If they choose to go through these lands, they had better avoid detection (or at least recognition) by officials of either clan. (Note - Toshi Ranbo is virtually surrounded by Lion and Phoenix - so this excursion should be difficult).

Focus

The man in question is Tonbo Hanabo, formerly Isawa Hanabo. He was an elderly fire shugenja already when the Dragon-Phoenix war began. His only daughter was married to a Tonbo yojimbo and lived in Kyuden Tonbo. When the Lion marched on the Dragonfly, he went frantic, trying to get the Phoenix to prevent their new allies from marching on their old ones. When he learned that his daughter and three grandchildren were slaughtered in the Lion massacre of Kyuden Tonbo he went mad with rage and mourn. He defected to the Dragon, and while trying to save as many Dragonfly children as possible, hoping against hope to find one of his grandchildren alive, he attacked the Phoenix and Lion armies quite mercilessly, and didn't hesitate to give away Phoenix secrets to their enemies. When the war ended and Sezaru restored Kyuden Tonbo, Hanabo joined the Dragonfly. Obviously both the Lion and the Phoenix would love to lay their hands on him, and the Dragonfly would like his existence to remain secret, both to spare the man who helped save many Dragonfly children, and so as not to sully their restored alliance with the Phoenix. He was on a mission from the Dragonfly to the Brotherhood of Shinsei in the Imperial City when the Unicorn armies attacked it.

Strike

Ikoma Ritsu, a Lion magistrate, is aware that Hanabo is somewhere in the city and would like nothing better than to expose him, and any who aids him, to the Phoenix. He also guesses that the Dragonfly would try to smuggle him out of the city. He does not know, however, where Hanabo is hidden, nor how he is to be transferred to Kyuden Tonbo. He will stop almost at nothing to find out, though.

*Callimachus**To Avenge a Tree***Challenge**

The PCs are ordered to deal with suspected Bloodspeaker activity in a nearby forest, such as disappearances, strange lights and noises, and other similar occurrences. The Kitsune Mori or Shinomen Mori are particularly fitting for this purpose, but almost any wooded area would serve. One possible setup is to have the party included in the Miya's Blessing, sent to restore the Badger lands. As the Badger have little in the way of mystical knowledge and manpower, they might turn to the PCs. Similar reasons can be used with any other minor clan, like the Hare or Sparrow. For more mystically adept clan like the Fox, on the other hand, it works best if the PCs are actually part of the clan affected, or if a Great Clan is interested in getting political favor from the involved minor clan.

Focus

Strange things are indeed happening in the woods, including disappearances, but as the PCs are to find out, they have been caused by the disgruntled spirits of the forest. Having the party attacked by sentient vines, normally meek animals such as does and rabbits, or even by walking trees would be very in keeping with this scenario.

Strike

The reason the forest spirits are enraged was because of the death of the elder Kodama (Tree Spirit) at the hands of a Bloodspeaker. To add insult to injury, the Maho-Tsukai used the Kodama's remains to carve divination sticks, and the forest is lashing out at the perceived insult.

One way to quiet the forest is to track down the offender, who has since then moved away, and return the remains with the proper respect.

If you want to make this scene more morally ambiguous the Kodama might have been unknowingly killed by a lumberjack (who then proceeded to carve dice out of the tree's wood).

Paranoia

This CFS works best in a single clan party, but can be used on any multi-clan party with little change. It can also be used with any clan, although it works best with a relatively small or isolated clan, where politics can become rather bloody, and an elderly Daimyo with no clear succession established. In the current timeline the Ox, Sparrow, Hare and Badger all fill these requirements, with the Ox and Hare being the most obvious choices.

Challenge

The party's Lord suspects them to be disloyal, and orders their arrest. Depending on how kind the GM is feeling, this would be a good plot to use *in media res*, with the PCs already arrested, or perhaps even on the run.

Focus

The Lord, already ageing, has become more paranoid and reclusive, relying more and more on his Chamberlain, Masakatsu, to run his day-to-day affairs. While Masakatsu is ostensibly competent in his duties, he is not a well-liked figure within the clan (Hint: This may mean that if the PCs are thrown in jail, their jailers might not be entirely opposed to them "finding" an exit).

Strike

Masakatsu is paving the way to replace his own lord as head of the clan. Ideally, this can be foreshadowed by having known opponents and rivals of Masakatsu being disgraced or executed. If the PCs have reason to suspect that he is anything but loyal, or if Masakatsu suspects that they suspect him, they will find themselves at odds with the deceitful Chamberlain. It's up to the PCs to prove their innocence, either by removing Masakatsu's influence, or by pleading their case eloquently before their lord.

This is a situation to which a duel (iaijutsu, of course!) could obviously offer a solution. In this case making Masakatsu a competent duelist capable of giving a PC a run for his money is a good idea.

The Abduction

This CFS is based around the Falcon, Fox and Hare clan rivalries, and can easily involve members from the Crab, Crane, Scorpion, Sparrow, Wasp or Mantis, depending on the timeline used.

Challenge

A political marriage is arranged between the two clans, to bridge a tentative alliance. This can easily be among the Fox and the Crane, Crab and Falcon, or whatever clans are more convenient for your campaign, and the PCs are ordered to serve the groom, and receive the bride in her new home.

At your discretion, you may even want to start to involve your PCs in this plot earlier, by making them act as matchmakers and negotiators for the union.

Another option is to have the PCs work as the escort for the bride-to-be.

Focus

The bride is kidnapped. Alternatively, if you have chosen to have the PCs work as her escort, someone is trying to kidnap her.

Evidently the loss of the bride-to-be would be a great shame for the groom's clan and would stress the relationship between the prospective allies. It is up to the PCs to make sure nothing happens to the bride or to recover her if something does happen.

Strike

Depending on how you intend to set up this CFS, you have multiple options:

- The kidnapping is the work of a rival clan intending to extort land from either one of the marrying clans.

- The kidnapping is the work of bandits for a big fat ransom, or because they intend to sell a pretty girl as a geisha.

- The kidnapping was organized by the groom unhappy to being forced to marry some unknown girl.

- The kidnapping was organized by the bride who is unhappy at being forced into a political marriage.

- Everything is a complex Scorpion or Otomo plot. They see a possible alliance between, say, the Crane and the Fox as undesirable, so it must be stopped, preferably with the use of a pawn, like the Crab or the Hare. This can be achieved by using troops equipped with gear from the proxy clan or by setting up a ransom that would benefit the patsy (i.e. having the Fox clan granting some of their land unto the Hare or the Falcon).

- Of course in the above scenario just killing the girl would achieve almost the same results.

- All of the above. That's right, all of the above. There are multiple parties with reasons to prevent this marriage, and all of them set up their own individual kidnappings. Of course, only a sadistic Gamemaster, hell-bent on making his players crazy, would spring such a surprise on them.

As an alternative you may actually want to task your players to prevent the marriage rather than securing the bride, particularly if your players are of a dishonorable persuasion, or otherwise enjoy engaging into ninja hijinks.

Mirumoto Kuro

Foxy Negotiations

Challenge

The PCs are asked to participate in the negotiations between the Fox and the Mantis regarding the Fox's absorption into the Mantis. They either participate as mediator, representative of one of the parties, official witness, or simply are there to gather first-hand news of the event for their respective Clans. It could even be that they simply happen to be there while the negotiations are underway...

Focus

Eventually, strange incidents start plaguing the negotiations: there's an infestation of rats in Kyuden Kitsune, a fire in the kitchen, things start to get misplaced... It looks like the negotiations are plagued with bad luck. Eventually, an individual important to the proceedings goes missing.



Strike

The culprits are in fact a gang of kitsune spirits from Chikushudo. They are afraid that by becoming part of a Great Clan, the Fox will lose their ways and their connections to the spirits, or that perhaps the Mantis will try to lumber wood in the sacred forest.

Tour of the Minor Clans

Notes: This CFS is intended to be the bare bones of a larger campaign, and thus enough details are left vague as to allow the GM to mold it to his own vision.

Challenge

The PCs are asked to escort a Miya herald on his tour of the Minor Clans. He is to visit each Minor Clan and take notes on each of them for the Emperor (depending on which time period you play, this could have been inspired by Miya Hotaru's trip across each of the Great Clans, or may even inspire it).

Focus

This long trip will be fraught with peril; surviving an avalanche in the Badger territory, getting lost in Kitsune Mori when their guide suddenly and mysteriously dies, being attacked by pirates while visiting the Bat Clan, helping Tortoise bushi quell a foray of Shadowlands creatures from the ruins of Otsan Uchi, etc...

Strike

Whether these events have all been arranged by an opponent of the PCs or of the Miya, or are just random events (the usual risks of adventuring) not connected to each other is up to the Gamemaster.

Kalajel

The Herb's Price

Challenge

A minor clan daimyo's beloved elderly mother has become sick with a terrible disease, and no healer has been able to find a cure. While the PCs are visiting the town, they come across an old medicine seller who assures them that he has a cure. The PCs know that if they can cure the mother, they will gain much favor with this lord. The lord may be able to provide troops in the springtime wars, trading concessions, political favors, and more. While he is limited to the influence of a Minor Clan, he is still a great lord in his own right, and another ally would be invaluable to their lord.

Focus

The problem is that the cure is a rare herb that grows far away, in a distant clan's land. The way is treacherous, and very difficult. The medicine seller will go, but he needs protection. All he asks is to be made a court physician if he is successful (a very modest request for saving

the daimyo's mother, really). The trail should be long and hard, with terrain the party is not used to. If they are Dragon, it should be in the lowlands. If they come from the plains, they should encounter mountains, if they live in the cities, deep woods.

Strike

Not only is the herb hard to get to, but another is seeking it. This other group is from a different minor clan, one not allied to the one the PCs are helping, and they are all kin of a young child who has grown ill of the same disease. They must race for the herb, for it is grown only in one location and even then is rarer than a winter rose. When they finally find it, the second party makes an impassioned plea: they need it for their youngest sibling, but they have no power, no political sway, nothing to offer but their thanks.

Who do the PCs help? The elderly mother who might die soon anyway, but grants great political favors? Or the young child with a full life ahead of them, who has nothing to offer? Samurai must serve their lord first above all else, but a samurai must also be merciful. Shugenja may also feel that mercy is more important, or that the child has a better chance, especially if the child might have the makings of a shugenja herself. The healer might want the herb to save the mother, just so he can have a guaranteed income. On the other hand, will the mother be happy knowing that extending her life by a few years cost the life of a small child? Will the lord be happy if he knows the price of his mother's life? Will their lord be happy at the cost of the favor if they save the mother at the cost of the innocent's life, or regret the failed opportunity if they save the child?

To add more complications, maybe the mother is infamous (or maybe the child is known for being an unholy terror, or has the "Dark Fate" disadvantage). Perhaps the PCs have met one or the other of the two people? Perhaps the child is right there, begging the PCs for their help with tear filled eyes?

Akodo Akira



Unexpected Guests

Challenge

It is time for the Winter Court of a Minor Clan. Everyone is busy preparing, and looking forward to some months of eating, talking, playing games and seeing old friends, as the Winter Courts of the Minor Clans usually are more relaxed than those of the Great Clans, due to their limited impact on Rokugani politics.

Focus

Winter comes abruptly, and very early. Extreme snowstorms cripple the region. Fortunately, most Minor Clans representatives have already arrived. Soon enough, a messenger arrives at the castle with the following message: "The Scorpion delegation, on its way to the Winter Court of our Glorious Emperor, cannot travel any further due to the extreme nature of the current weather. Please prepare to host the retinue until the climate permits safe travel to the Imperial Court".

A few hours later a similiar message arrives, from the Crane Clan... And then from the Crab.

Strike

The players now have to deal (whether they are part of a Great Clan retinue or are Minor Clan guests to the court) with the fighting and politicking of the Great Clans, while all the Minor Clan guests are in way above their heads and struggle to handle the situation and the much more skilled and educated courtiers from the major clans...

The Minor Clan daimyo is running around frantically, needing any help he can find to prevent his court or lands from becoming a battlefield for the major clans...

Meanwhile, the local shugenja cannot understand why the storm will not show any signs of clearing up...

Tokkie

Introduction to Hanami Mura



Welcome to Hanami Mura!

The modest city of Hanami Mura—some would call it a big village—is located in the lands of the Hare clan, on the Northern shore of the Mizu-Umi no Sakura Yuki (Cherry Blossom Snow Lake [EEE]), the source of Shiroy Kin Kawa (White Gold River [FFF]). The closest cities are in Crab territory, south of White Gold river: two days walk along the lake's shore is the large town of Maemikake, and in between, Sakura no Yuki Mura and its famous sake breweries. The submerged Naga city of Nirukti is rumored to be somewhere west of Hanami Mura. However, the most famous landmark of the region is the nearby Shinomen Forest. The lake and river are full of fish, freshwater mussels (used both for food and mother-of-pearl jewelry) and crayfishes, and the land is fertile, producing bountiful harvests.

The city is home to about 3000 permanent inhabitants. Roughly, the composition of the population is: 1800 peasants, 250 craftsmen/artisans, 500 monks, and about 450 members of the samurai class. Additionally, when the trees are blossoming (which is from the first day of spring to the last day of autumn), between 50 and 1000 visitors swell the ranks of the population. Over the year, the average number of pilgrims in the city is 300, with one peak during the first days of spring when the new blossoms are celebrated in the Empire-wide Cherry Blossom Festival, and another during the last weeks of autumn when Hanami Mura's unique Cherry Blossom Snow Festival is held. Most pilgrims are monks, but a good quarter is samurai, who typically come accompanied by a small retinue. Visitors usually do not stay longer than a few weeks, but the most devout sometimes stay the whole blossom season.

What is Hanami Mura?

Beginning with this issue, *Musha Shugyo* will carry a section presenting an original setting in Rokugan, the city of Hanami Mura. This article introduces you to the city and future issues will explore its inhabitants and locations of interest in greater detail.

At the Crossroads

The city's location near the territories of several Great and Minor Clans, on waterways used for trade and transportation between those clans and beyond, played a role in its development. But even with such natural assets, a village located this close to the mysterious—and often dangerous—Shinomen Mori, on the western edge of the Empire, wouldn't normally grow as big as Hanami Mura is. What drove its expansion is twofold: religion and politics. Pilgrims from all over the Empire come to Hanami Mura from spring to autumn. With these monks and samurai come followers and retainers. This abundance of visitors, especially the wealthy samurai, contributes to the city's prosperity, and many of its businesses take advantage of this situation, which explains the unusual concentration of monasteries, inns, restaurants and even handicraft and souvenir shops in Hanami Mura. Many talented artists also come to the city in search of inspiration and serenity. Most stay only a year or two, sometimes less, but a few have made Hanami Mura their home. Classic scenes of the blossoming cherry trees can

Hollow Land

The land in the vicinity of the lake, from the Shinomen forest down to the Kawa no Kin river, is primarily composed of limestone and covered by a thick layer of soil. Due to the abundant humus in the forest, the water is slightly more acidic than normal. Consequently, water-carved natural caves are common in the area. Most are flooded or crossed by underground streams. From time to time, a farmer will go to work and find a newly appeared sinkhole in his field, or a stonecutter will discover a new cave network the hard way. These caves are very dangerous to explore (they are usually narrow and slippery), and few will dare enter them as no one knows what kind of creatures could dwell inside.

be found in samurai mansions all over the Empire. The wealth that samurai patrons invest in these artists finds its way into the local economy, and some art enthusiasts of the noble class (the Crane in particular) even come to Hanami Mura solely for its artisan quarter, in search of the artist who will be the darling of the next Winter Court.

It might be difficult to believe that such a peaceful and open location could be a holding of the Hare, a fiercely paranoid clan bent on eradicating hidden enemies of the Empire, with little time for religiosity and even less for art. But the truth is even the rough Hare need food and money to survive, and Hanami Mura's taxes provide a large share of the clan's meager income. Even though most of the regional trade is conducted in the Yasuki provinces between the Crab, Mantis and Crane, or along the Kawa no Kin (River of Gold [NN]) for the Scorpion, there is a minor trade route linking the Crab territory to the North of the Empire (the Unicorn lands in particular) that goes along the edge of the Shinomen and through the Hare and Scorpion lands.

The Hare also needed a place where they could appropriately greet and accommodate ambassadors of the other clans. Too paranoid to receive these delegations in Shiro Usagi or the clan's other places of power, the Hare decided that Hanami Mura's eccentric location made it the perfect place to receive guests from outside the clan. Compared to the rest of the stark and utilitarian Hare holdings, the simple but elegant estates of Hanami Mura seem luxurious in contrast. Of all the Great Clans, only the Crab and the Lion have official dignitaries in Hanami Mura; the Crab (the Kuni in particular) because they are neighbor and they share a grim determination to destroy evil (they share intelligence as well on some occasions), and the Lion (mostly Ikoma) thanks of the old alliance and friendship they have with the Hare. This does not mean the other Great Clans are not represented. On the contrary, even if they're not official emissaries, whenever samurai of notable status come to Hanami Mura, even on personal business, it is expected that they will visit the Governor to pay their respects at least once, and more often than not, they will be invited back to spend some time at the Governor's court. The coming and going of visitors ensures that the court is never the same from one day to the next.

Samurai from all the Great Clans and Imperial families, in particular Phoenix, Dragon, and Seppun, come on pilgrimage to the city and visit its shrines and temples. This is the primary reason for traveling to Hanami Mura, but some visitors have other purposes. Many Crane, whose appreciation of art and beauty is well-known, come to peruse the local artists' works or enjoy the scenery, while sophisticated Crane and Imperial courtiers come for a rest from stressful court life (not without bringing their own small court of sycophants along), and Crane and Crab merchants come to trade for Hanami Mura's famous cherry products. A few Mantis merchants also do business in Hanami Mura, but it is mostly a justification for them to come to the friendly river port and berth for a much needed break on their trips back and forth on the Kawa no Kin river. Some Phoenix scholars study the Shinomen and the unique cherry trees found there.

Unicorn troops based in the Shinomen come to trade and re-supply. Finally, the Scorpion, though unwelcome, maintain discreet agents in the city to keep an eye on all these activities.

In addition to the small Crab and Lion delegations, some Minor Clans maintain a permanent presence in Hanami Mura, finding it to be the perfect ground for building their alliance. In particular, the Fox and Sparrow have permanent embassies in town (despite the past tensions between the Fox and the Hare), and the Tsuruchi family of the Mantis (formerly the Wasp Clan) maintains some presence in this minor court in honor of past alliances.

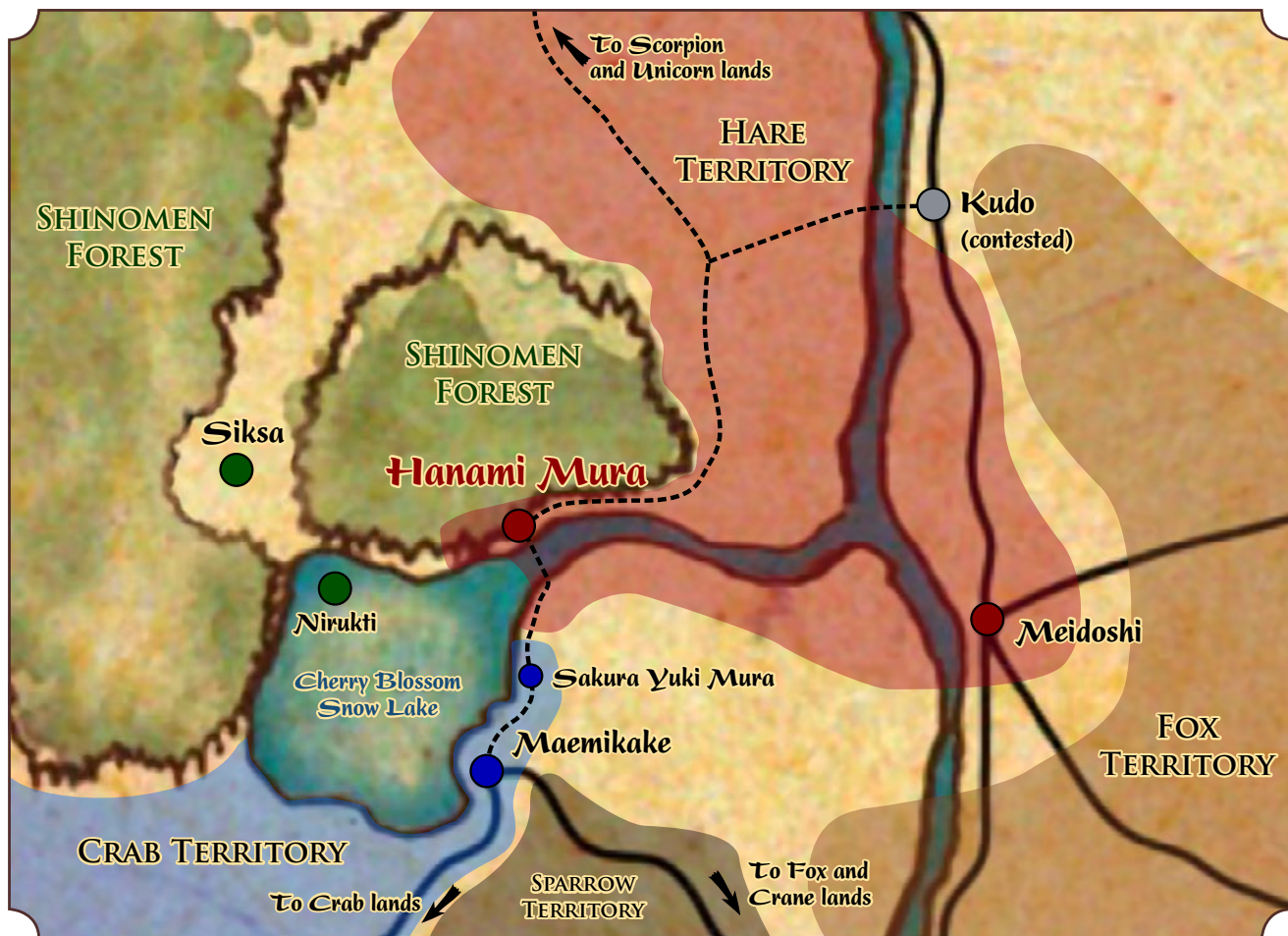
Cherry Blossoms

The Sakura Yuki (Winter Cherry Tree), a unique species of cherry tree with smooth white bark and small pale green leaves, makes up most of the forest along the northern shore of the lake. They blossom from early spring to autumn, when the pure white petals finally fall en masse during the Cherry Blossom Snow Festival (it is usually held during the last two weeks of autumn, but dates vary to make the festival coincide with the blossoms' fall). The petals cover the lake so that it looks as if it were blanketed with snow as far as the eye can see. This place is renowned all over the Empire, and many monks and spiritual samurai come to meditate in this serene landscape.

Less known is another oddity of the cherry trees: they bear fruit for a single week at the heart of winter. The sight of the bright red cherries on snow-covered branches is marvelous, and their exquisite and nutritive flesh is used in several local delicacies that are renowned by gourmets across the Empire. Since winter keeps all but the most courageous merchants off the roads, the Hanami Mura cherries and fresh products made with them (like the famous cherry-flavored mochi) are extremely rare and expensive delicacies that few lords aside from the Emperor himself can afford to have on their tables. Some of the harvested cherries are preserved in sake and used in the famous Three Kami sake.

There are many legends explaining how this particular species of tree came to be, but no scholar has been able to separate truth from folklore in the tales, assuming they contain any truth at all.





This might make it look like Hanami Mura is a political and diplomatic nexus that cannot be ignored, but in truth, delegations are often a one-man-and-his-assistant affair, and even the largest representations like those of the Fox or the Crab do not number more than four or five persons and assistants. Deals and alliances are made in the small courts of Hanami Mura, whether in the Governor's court or in private guest rooms in one of the city's inns, but the most important agreements concern only the Minor Clans while most are on a more personal level between a few samurai. In fact, the reason the Great Clans keep some envoys in Hanami Mura (in an official diplomatic capacity or not) is because it offers the advantage of being relatively neutral ground where inexperienced courtiers can hone their skills, and also in the hope that others will let some of their clans' secrets slip in the deceptively relaxed courts.

Legends

Most legends surrounding the origins of the unique cherry trees of Hanami Mura involve a mysterious mythical being and a wise man. Among the many variations, here is the most popular:

"A long time ago, a very wise man, some say he was a monk, sat down under the cherry blossoms on the very first day of spring, in a time when the blossoms here were the same as elsewhere in Rokugan: an ephemeral bloom of delicate pinkish white petals. He was the first man

to travel this far and reach the shore of the lake. But he came only to rest, exhausted by a mortal wound he had received in battle with some dark foe in the great forest. He had fought all winter the great beast and in the end had been victorious. But victory would soon cost him his life.

The silent cry of pain emanating from his body and soul reached out to the kami of the cherry trees in the area. Mourning the end of winter, the Yuki no Onna living in the cherry orchard sensed a kindred spirit in the dying man and approached him while the kami surrounded them with the comforting scent of the blossoms and the sound of the wind through their branches.

"You are mourning for the end of your life," she said, "just as I am mourning for the end of winter. Perhaps companionship would ease our pain." At the sight of the beautiful maiden and her fair skin, the fire in the man's heart was rekindled. At the sound of the kami's windy song in the branches, the pain in the man's body was lessened. "I do not fear the passage to the next realm," he said, "but only that I will leave no legacy to the world." The maiden replied, "You can share your tale with me, and I will make sure it will be remembered." Thankful, the man began telling the story of his life to the maiden and the kami, sharing it so that the story would not be lost. As the kami listened, no blossoms fell, as if the world was holding its breath in anticipation to the man's next words. The kami's power and interest lent the man the strength to tell his story. When he eventually reached the end of his tale, the kami crowded around the wise man,

delighting in the story, and asked if they could share a story with him as well.

The man replied, "Although I am not much longer for this world, I would very much like to hear the story. Tell me all that you can before I perish, as I cannot think of a better place to die than under these blossoms with such fine company." The maiden, using much of her ancient strength, promised him that he would not perish as long as one cherry blossom still hung to the branches. As she spoke so, the blossoms turned white, as pure and sparkling as fresh snow. "Look," she said, "fragments of winter, snowflakes on the trees. So long as they hold, so shall you remain by my side."

And so the kami began telling the story of the world to the man, enlightening him more so than any man or woman, except perhaps for Shinsei. And the maiden was true to her word, for although the kami's story stretched from spring until fall, the man did not perish, nor did he need to move to eat or drink, or fall asleep, because such was the combined power of the maiden and the kami in those days, and such was the will of the man, who laid down under the blossoms, his head resting on the maiden's lap, learning the secrets of the world.

But as fall came, the kami's story also came to an end. So the man said, "My friends, I thank you for your story, and for both extending my life and giving me such insight on the world. No man has ever had such a fine death, to have the world's secrets given to him in life, so that his spirit might go to the next realm with such knowledge. But I cannot ask you to give more of your strength, as one day others will need to know your wisdom as well."

The maiden said, "Your tale will not be forgotten. These woods will forever recount the events that took place here. Such will be my parting gift, and such will be your legacy to the world." Smiling, he fell silent, and slowly closed his eyes. The kami wept, and the blossoms that had held all summer finally fell and were swept to the lake by a sudden chilly breeze. As the wise man's last breath came, so the last petal left its branch to rest on the lake. The maiden

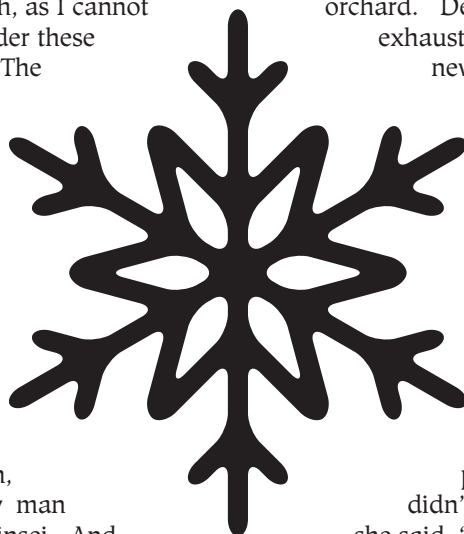
wept tears of ice, and the first snowflake of winter fell from the Heavens, followed by many others.

Many years later, in the heart of winter, another man found himself lost and hungry in the frozen cherry orchard. Destiny brought him, unsteady and exhausted, to the body of the wise man. The newcomer could not have known that the wise man had passed away long ago, as his cold body was perfectly preserved in the serene state of his final moments. In spite of his condition, the lost man decided to provide a grave to the dead man. His task finished, he collapsed in the snow.

A frigid hand raised his face from the cold earth, and he saw the maiden smiling at him. "You have done a great deed of compassion, providing a grave for this man you didn't know. I have another task for you," she said. "But first, you shall eat." As she spoke, bright red cherries appeared on the trees all around the man. He could finally sate his hunger and quench his thirst. With every cherry he ate, he could feel his strength replenished and warmth returning in his limbs. "I owe you my life. What is it you require from me, my Lady? Ask and I shall repay my debt," he said, fully satiated.

The maiden told him about the man he had just interred, and the promise she made that his tale would not be forgotten. Humbled by the wise man's life story, the newcomer replied: "I shall tell the tale to anyone I meet, so that he is not forgotten. And on his tomb I shall build an altar, to mark the location for future generations."

And so it is that the blossoms last through spring to fall, and why the villagers are blessed with cherries in the heart of winter. For the Yuki no Onna still watches over the orchard and keeps her promise. This is also why so many come to meditate under the cherry trees, in the hope that the wise kami will share their secrets once more. For such was the purity of the fallen man's soul that the kami still hold reverence for him. Perhaps they have told their secrets to another over the years, but as the samurai and monks still come to sit underneath them, perhaps not. As for the Altar to the Wise Man, though its existence is undisputed its location remains a mystery to this day."



A Brief Who's Who of Hanami Mura

The Governor: **Usagi Ginsei**
The Captain of the Guard: **Usagi Hotsuken**
The Head Magistrate: **Ujina Mariko**

MASTERS OF THE MAJOR TEMPLES

White Blossom Temple: **Kanajiwa**
Defenders of the Blossoms Temple: **O-Tozu**
Hanami Temple: **Ichige**

HEADS OF THE PERMANENT DELEGATIONS

Crab Clan: **Kuni Godai**
Lion Clan: **Ikoma Hiruso**
Dragonfly Clan: **Tonbo Daikon**
Fox/Mantis Clan: **Kitsune Nanami**
Monkey Clan: **Fuzake Mugen**
Ox Clan: **Morito Fang-Chuo**
Sparrow Clan: **Suzume Hirozuma**
Tortoise Clan: **Kasuga Jinshu**
Wasp/Mantis Clan: **Tsuruchi Toe**

HEADS OF THE NON-PERMANENT DELEGATIONS

Crane Clan: **Kakita Makiko**
Dragon Clan: **Togashi Koengo**
Badger Clan: **Ichiro Renken**
Bat Clan: **Komori Mizuho**
Oriole Clan: **Tsi Toredo**

History

Pre-history – The various legends describing the origins of the Winter Cherry Trees all take place before the fall of the Kami.

Early First Century – Small human tribes settle along the shore of the lake, at a time when this part of Rokugan has not yet been integrated in the Hantei's Empire.

Late First Century – The human settlements are regularly ravaged by Shadowlands beasts coming through the Shinomen Mori. Akodo-kami notices the incursions and sends troops to defend the Empire. Hanami Mura is officially founded, and is now integrated in the Emerald Empire. However, its remote location and lack of strategic interest ensure it remains in neutral lands for many years to come.

Fourth Century – The village is often targeted by bandit raids coming from the forest. A samurai on musha shugyo comes to the village and agrees to help the peasants. With skill and cunning, he defeats the bandits and kills their leader, but dies shortly after of wounds received in the battle. Many villagers see in this unnamed ronin the reincarnation of the legendary wise man, and a shrine is built in his honor. A few years later, an unidentified party desecrates the shrine and steals the urn containing the samurai's remains under the cover of the night. Rumors of sightings of the heroic samurai's ghost begin.

Fifth Century – Word of the village's unique blossoms slowly trickles out. Wandering monks are the first to visit regularly. To accommodate the pilgrims, the monk Kiroka founds Hanami Mura's first temple: Shiroy Hana Shudoin (the Temple of the White Blossom). It begins as a modest shrine with a wooden dormitory nearby.

Sixth Century – After an incredibly plentiful harvest of rice, a shrine to Inari is built to thank the generous Fortune.

The Ghost of the Heroic Samurai

No one but a handful of Scorpion samurai know who Hanami Mura's savior was. His name was Bayushi Takuro, and when his daimyo asked him to sacrifice his honor in service of the clan, he chose to betray his clan rather than sully his honor. Aware that his life was forfeit, he disappeared and passed as a ronin, never staying in any place too long. His training allowed him to escape his former comrades and Traitors' Grove for many years. His former daimyo could not stand the outrage when word of his death and elevation to the status of hero came to him. He sent a group of men to recover the ashes and return with them. Even if Takuro's soul could not be bound to a tree in Traitors' Grove, a Yogo shugenja could ensure that it would not be able to rest in peace. After almost 800 years of restless lingering in Ningen-do, Takuro's soul is dangerously getting close to the breaking point and could become a very serious threat to Hanami Mura.

Early Seventh Century – Shiroy Hana Shudoin undergoes its most ambitious expansion works to accommodate its more and more numerous pilgrims. It becomes nearly as big as it is today.

Late Seventh Century – A few monks from the Order of Thunder settle in Hanami Mura at the villagers' request, to bolster their strength in case of supernatural attacks or bandit raids. They found the Hana Bengosha Shudoin (Temple of the Defenders of the Blossoms) at the heart of the village.

Eighth Century – The Hare Clan is founded in 750. Hanami Mura is not mentioned in the edict of the clan's creation, but the Hare soon claim the village as they reinforce their borders with the Shinomen Mori.

Ninth Century – Hanami Mura, under Hare protection, finally starts to grow into a small city. As it develops, the stories of its beautiful landscape spread across the Empire, attracting more and more visitors. In 889, the Emperor Hantei XXIV himself comes shortly after his coronation to spend some time beneath the blossoms, which greatly increases the city's fame, especially among the Imperial families.

Tenth Century – Hanami Mura and its unique blossoms are now well known throughout the Empire. Monks were the first to start the tradition of the pilgrimage to the city, and by now most of the major sects have established a presence. Many devout samurai soon follow their example. In their wake, artists come to the city and found the famous artisans quarter.

Eleventh Century – Believed by many to be only legends, some Naga scouts are spotted swimming below the lake's surface, but they remain elusive.

Twelfth Century – 1123-1125 – The Hare clan is disbanded. The city shrinks after numerous bandit attacks. A few ronin, presumably former Hare, eventually gather in Hanami Mura to defend it. Hulls of empty buildings leer over the remaining villagers as very few pilgrims come during these years.

1125 – The Hare Clan is reborn and begins rebuilding. The ronin guarding the village "join" the Hare. Many of the abandoned buildings are torn down by the Hare to be used in reconstruction. Daimyo Usagi Ozaki relocates most of the Hare's diplomatic activities to Hanami Mura while Shiro Usagi is being rebuilt, but soon realizes the advantages of the move and decides to make it permanent.

1126 – The Wasting Disease slows rebuilding efforts as the city focuses on survival.

1127 – Rumors of a Shadowlands force moving only a few days walk away reach the village. They are discounted, until word of the Battle of Beiden Pass comes. The Hare dispatch additional samurai to Hanami Mura, to patrol the area and give guests of the Hare (and villagers) time to escape if such an army comes close again.

1128 – The Clan Wars largely leave the city alone, though it sees many people scarred from them. Hanami Mura's population increases as both refugee farmers and craftsmen gather under the protection of the Hare.

1129 – The village stands in awe as a troop of Naga moves south to join the Crab at the Wall.

1130 – A shrine to Kisada is built after he is given the status of Fortune of Persistence. It is perhaps the only such shrine built out of Crab lands in honor of the new Fortune. Such a shrine fits perfectly in Hanami Mura, where visitors also pay their respects to the year-long enduring cherry blossoms.

1132 – Pilgrims begin returning in numbers to the village after word of Emperor Toturi's rescue. Many wish to distance themselves from the troubles they find elsewhere in the Empire, but some bring their feuds and problems with them. Villagers barricade their doors at night, afraid of strange shadows, and are not really comforted by the sight of the Hare magistrates on maximum alert.

1134 – Peace returns after the Battle of Oblivion's Gate. Some returned spirits gather in the village, seeking the place of solace they once knew in their previous lives.

1136 – The Unicorn start patrolling the Shinomen Mori during the Nagas' sleep and often stop in the city for resupply and rest.

1138-1153 – The war of spirits rages but leaves the isolated city untouched as most of the spirits leave to answer the call of Hantei XVI. Hanami Mura's status as a holy place, along with its remoteness, protects the city from the worst direct effects of the War of the Spirits, though the strife plaguing the Empire reduces the number of pilgrims and the city's economy survives precariously.

1153-1158 – During these five years of peace, Hanami Mura's economy experiences a great boom as many war veterans come to visit and find some serenity under the white blossoms.

1158-1160 – After Emperor Toturi I is killed, strife returns to the empire as the Four Winds' war begins. Again Hanami Mura is left relatively untouched, though the visitors become scarcer. While the Great Clans fight for power, the Minor Clans' leaders begin to think that they need to increase their cooperation to better endure the conflicts that plague the Empire. The seed of the Minor Clans Alliance is sown, and much of it is planned in Hanami Mura while the Great Clans war with each other.

1165 – Iuchiban returns and cast his Rain of Blood over the Empire. The contingent of monks living in the city overcomes the ordeal mostly unscathed, but many of the samurai who are resentful of their assignments in what they consider a backwater minor court cannot resist the bloodspeaker's call. The Hare magistrates quickly deal with the bloodspeaker outbreak, but some escape and find refuge in the nearby Shinomen Mori, where they plot their revenge. The cherry blossoms, which remained a pure white even at the worst of the Rain of Blood, turn black a few days after the end of the Rain and immediately fall. Many fear the worst for the future, and great rituals of purification are organized in a rare joint effort from all of Hanami Mura Brotherhood's sects.

1166 – Rise of the Gozoku. In these uncertain times, few clans send envoys to the Hare court. This is actually a boon for the city, as it makes sure it escapes the political games that destabilize the Empire. Hanami Mura uses this time to slowly recover from the Rain of Blood's aftermath.

The Fox Clan's Annexation

The integration of the Fox Clan into the Mantis Clan may have as much effect on Hanami Mura's political scene as the Gamemaster wishes. We will assume, in *Musha Shugyo*, that the effects are limited, so that we do not have to describe every location or NPC with the pre- or post-annexation situation in mind. Even after they join the Mantis, the proud Fox will want to maintain as independent an appearance as possible, and this means the Kitsune family will keep representatives in Hanami Mura, just like the Tsuruchi family does. It is possible that some Kitsune opposed to the annexation might even go as far as to plot in Hanami Mura to end the arrangement with the Mantis. Finally, instead of actively participating in the construction of the Minor Clan Alliance, they will monitor it with the Tsuruchi for the Mantis clan, and they will probably continue to support it. The other Minor Clans, however, might be divided on the change. Some will be satisfied for having gained the support of a Great Clan to their cause, while others will consider the Fox with suspicion, seeing them as a wolf in the sheepfold.

1167-1168 – The Crab-Scorpion war is mostly a series of small-scale skirmishes. The Hare lands are stuck between the two clans' territories, and thus their troops often pass through without the Hare's consent, causing much stress to the Hare and their vassals. When Kisada leads raids on Scorpion assets, he sometimes sets up temporary camps on Hare lands (but always far from Hanami Mura). The Hare do not want to be involved in this war, but they are not in a position to do much about the Crab incursions, and Usagi Ozaki cannot deny that he enjoys seeing the Scorpion being given a lesson in humility.

1168 – The Fox delegation is reduced to a single representative when all but one samurai are withdrawn to deal with some mysterious trouble in their home provinces. Unbeknownst to all, the Fox are under attack by strange bandits in the Kitsune Mori.

1169 – Daigotsu relocates the capital of his Lost Empire to the Shadowlands Marshes of the Shinomen Mori, where he puts in motion his plans for the Spider clan. The bloodspeaker cells that took refuge in the forest soon join his ranks and are ordered to stay as far away as possible from the Hare samurai, so as to not risk exposing Daigotsu to them. The Fox Clan's ordeal is revealed, and the Mantis Clan promises help in exchange for the Fox's fealty. The annexation of the Fox upsets the balance of politics among the Minor Clans Alliance members, and it will take some time for them to digest the news.



Hanami Mura's Atmosphere

First and foremost, Hanami Mura is a religious center. Spirituality permeates the city, and the many temples, the monks dwelling there as well as pious samurai guests are a permanent reminder of the holiness of the place. Thus, the few authorized sake and geisha houses are inconspicuous and of the highest moral standard, while all other "sinful" activities, such as gambling, opium smoking or prostitution, are outright banned from the city. This doesn't always sit well with some of the more boisterous guests, in particular the Crab, Mantis and Unicorn, but the Hare magistrates patrolling the streets are uncompromising. The sanctity of the cherry blossoms and the security of this place depend on them.

Only when looking beyond the spiritual aspect of the city can the visitor remember that this is also the diplomatic center of the Hare Clan. Some of Hanami Mura's resident samurai are not here for religious purposes (though some may certainly enjoy this aspect of their stay); they are in the city to represent their clans in the court of the Hare. The Governor's court is the most prestigious court of the city as the Governor manages all diplomatic matters with other clans on behalf of the Hare Champion.

The governor's court is not, however, the only court that matters. Some powerful members of the Emperor's entourage regularly visit Hanami Mura. Imperials and influential courtiers of all the Great Clans frequently come on pilgrimage, invariably with sizeable retinues. Around these individuals, small exclusive informal courts spontaneously materialize in their personal guest rooms, as sycophants and self-interested visitors always quickly show up. To the discerning eye, the sight of a servant running between residences to deliver a message or an invitation is as common as the sight of a meditating samurai.

Lastly, the small but conspicuous community of artists and artisans certainly contributes to the unique mood of Hanami Mura. There is a wholesome emulation going on between them, and they all compete to make the city the most beautiful place of the Empire. Art is not reserved for the residences of the samurai, as wooden and stone sculptures decorate the streets, and the numerous shrines and temples are adorned with elaborate bas-reliefs and stunning paintings.

With the sanctity of the city to preserve and all these prestigious guests to protect, it is not surprising the Hare magistrates and samurai are especially on their guard, always ready to react to any danger or deal with any troublemaker. Consequently, crime is very low. Petty crimes such as robbery do happen, but rapes or murders are virtually unheard of, which makes it even more shocking when one occurs.

The Governor

Hanami Mura is hardly an average Hare city, and it needs a governor able to navigate the dangerous waters of Rokugani politics. It is thus no surprise that the agreeable and open Usagi Ginsei is not the average Hare samurai. His father Usagi Ikeda, during the years when the clan was disbanded, became the yojimbo of a Dragon magistrate named Kitsuki Izumasa, and he remained his loyal vassal even after the Hare was reborn. With no other relative to look after him, young Ginsei followed his father and Izumasa on their trips across Rokugan, learning from both along the way. Ginsei showed potential, so Izumasa arranged for him to be trained with the

Kitsuki. A few years after his gempukku among the Dragons, Ginsei decided it was time for him to earn his Hare heritage and forge his own destiny. He bade farewell to Ikeda and Izumasa and returned to the Hare lands. There, his skills and his worldly outlook allowed him to rise quickly from the ranks and gain the attention of the daimyo, Usagi Ozaki. Ginsei was sent to other clans as a diplomat and further honed his courtly skills, his amicable nature gaining him friends even among the sophisticated Crane. It

is said that it was his connections that got the Crane to assist the Hare against Jama Suru's vengeful army when the Lion wouldn't send support in 1165. When the previous Governor of Hanami Mura fell ill and retired five years ago, the Hare daimyo naturally came to Ginsei to fill the position and be his voice to the other clans. Ginsei happily obliged and the city is now growing steadily under his administration, as it benefits from his excellent personal relations with the Dragon and Crane clans. Ginsei enjoys creating small wooden sculptures and carvings, a habit he gained in his youth on the roads, and even

though he uses a simple knife the results are quite impressive. He often uses his miniature sculptures as introduction gifts when meeting other diplomats or courtiers.



Usagi Ginsei

Schools: Woodland Tracker/Kitsuki Courtier 3/Ginsei's Smile
Rank: 5 — **Insight:** 234

Air: 3 **Earth:** 2 **Fire:** 4 **Water:** 2 **Void:** 4
 Awareness: 5 Willpower: 4 Intelligence: 5 Perception: 5

Honor: 3.5 **Status:** 6.5 **Glory:** 3.0

Skills: Artisan: Wood Sculpting 5, Athletics 2, Calligraphy (Hare Clan Cipher) 3, Commerce 2, Courtier (Gossip) 5, Deceit (Seduction) 3, Defense 3, Etiquette (Bureaucracy) 5, Games (Go, Sadane) 3, Hunting (Trailblazing) 3, Investigation (Notice) 5, Kenjutsu (Katana) 3, Knives (Tanto) 3, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: Bloodspeakers 3, Lore: Heraldry 2, Lore: Kolat 3, Lore: Law 5, Lore: Naga (Shinomen Cities) 2, Medicine 2, Meditation 2, Spellcraft (Maho) 2, Stealth 3, Theology 1.

Advantages: Allies (Crane Courtier, Inf. 4/Dev. 1), Allies (Kitsuki Sensei, Inf. 2/Dev.2), Allies (Usagi Ozaki, Inf. 4/Dev. 2), Benten's Blessing, Clear Thinker, Multiple Schools, Social Position (Hanami Mura Governor).

Disadvantages: Lechery (2 points), Phobia (Snakes, 2 points).

NEW PATH

Ginsei's Smile (Courtier)

Ginsei's multiple experiences helped him to shape a technique of his own, adapting the Kitsuki method to his personal skills. He is the only person who knows this technique, and will probably never teach it to anyone but his own children.

Technique Rank: 4

Path of Entry: Kitsuki Courtier 3

Path of Egress: Kitsuki Courtier 4

TECHNIQUE

When participating in a contested Social roll against a single opponent, or when targeted by a Social roll (you need to be aware of it), before rolls are made, you may spend a Void point to force all participants to use Intelligence instead of the trait that would normally be used for the roll (for instance, you can force a contested Awareness/Courtier roll to be rolled as Intelligence/Courtier). You may add twice your Fire Ring to the total of all your Intelligence related rolls. This Path counts as a rank in the Kitsuki Courtier School.



A Quick Overview of the City

Hanami Mura can be divided into 4 areas: the city proper, the cherry grove, the fishermen district and the entertainment district.

Hanami Mura (Downtown)

Home to about three quarters of the town's inhabitants, this is the most populated section of the city. Most peasants live in the eastern quarters, while the samurai and the wealthy artists live near the lakeshore, in the western quarters. Innkeepers, merchants and craftsmen are scattered all over the city, while some monks live near or in the few downtown shrines and temples. At the southwest corner of the city, wedged between the lake and the river, is located the Governor's residence, which doubles as the Hare Clan's main court. The largest temple in the city is the Hana Bengosha Shudoin (Temple of the Defenders of the Blossoms) where monks from the Order of Thunder are established. Other noteworthy buildings include the small Hare garrison, Haven (the oldest inn of the city), and the Three Kami sake works.

Sakura District (The Cherry Grove)

West of the busy city's heart is the serene cherry grove that made Hanami Mura so popular. The population is made up primarily of monks of various orders, living in the temples located there and tending to the many shrines, altars and smaller temples scattered along the shore or in the forest. The two largest temples of this district are Shiroy Hana Shudoin (the Temple of the White Blossom) and the Hanami Temple. The first one accepts visiting monks from every sect as well as the most dedicated samurai pilgrims, and is the oldest of all Hanami Mura's temples. The small Makkura (Total Darkness) dojo, where the blind train to overcome their disability, is located on the temple's grounds. The second is home to the small sect dedicated to Hanami, the Fortune of Flowers, and is aptly named the Order of Eternal Bloom. Peasants also affectionately call them the gardener-monks, as they take it upon themselves to keep the grove in the best condition possible. They sweep the fallen leaves away, cut dead branches and so on, but always in a subtle and humble way that would not reveal to visitors they had a hand in the forest's natural beauty. Hanami Mura's largest and most expensive inn, the House of Fragrant Waters, is nestled between the cherry trees and the lake. It consists of a large central building linked to half a dozen small private guest houses built on stilts over the lake. This is where the wealthiest visitors stay, and their private courts are often on par with or surpass the Governor's in term of power and influence wielded by their guests.

Namazu District (The Fishermen quarter)

Hugging the southern bank of the river, on the opposite side of Hanami Mura's downtown, is the Namazu (Catfish) district. This is where the eta, most of them fishermen, live. It must be noted that to preserve the beauty of the lake, fishing boats are forbidden there. So the fishermen are restricted to boating on the river, and when fishing in the lake, they are limited to throwing nets from the shore. Eta women and children can be seen all



year long collecting freshwater mussels or hunting crawfishes on the river bank. Some distance south, there is a small outpost, next to the road going to Maemikake, where Hare guards control the traveling papers of visitors wishing to enter Hare territory.

Akamori District (The Entertainment Village)

For the visitors with a compulsive need to indulge themselves in activities not accepted in the city, there is Hanami Mura's Akamori (Red Forest) district, half a mile north of town, which focuses its commerce on all the distasteful activities banned from Hanami Mura. Technically, Akamori is part of Hanami Mura, but due to its eccentric location and the activities conducted there, most samurai prefer to think of it as a separate village (thus it is often called Akamori Mura). Many of the samurai who come in pilgrimage but find themselves unable to maintain the demanding ascetic lifestyle, along with many of the city's artists and diplomats, gather in Akamori to enjoy its colorful nights away from the disapproving eyes of the monks. The Hare magistrates, aware that Hanami Mura's austerity is not meant for everybody, tolerate Akamori. They maintain a cautious watch over the little entertainment hub, but try to remain as inconspicuous as possible and leave the patrons to their own devices as long as they do not create trouble. After all, most of the money spent in Hanami Mura is actually spent in Akamori, and the Hare need the tax income. Needless to say, it is also where they are the more likely to find Scorpion or underworld agents, so they prefer to limit them to a smaller area that is supposedly easier to control. Whether this tactic is successful remains to be seen.

The Three Kami Sake Works

Three Kami Sake Works is located on the northwestern side of Hanami Mura, just outside of the town proper and nestled amidst the famed Sakura Yuki orchards. The building itself is quite large, easily one of the largest structures in the town. It stands three stories tall, and has none of the sweeping rooflines or imposing architectural elements one would expect from such a widely renowned producer. It is as simple as the monks who toil there to make the sake.

As you arrive at the sake works from the town you are first stricken by its mere presence. It is tucked away inside a forested area, and the exterior of the building is aged and rugged like the trees around it, almost as if the forest seeks to hide its friend from prying eyes. The entrance is a series large torii arches inscribed with prayers to the fortunes. Inside these arches is a large gate that is generally open during daytime hours. Once through the gate you will see that the bottom floor of the building is mostly storage. This is the place where crates upon crates of their sake are stored before shipping across Rokugan. To the left is a walled off area with a single wide door. The door leads into the labeling room. In here several of the young monks label and clean the finished sake bottles before placing them into crates for storage. At the back of the room is a sturdy platform that can be raised and lowered between floors to carry the bottles from the bottling area above and down to the labeling room. Next to the platform is a set of stairs leading up to the second floor.

Mike Brodu

The first thing you will notice on the second floor is the pungency of ripe sake. Here in this room is where the monks pour the finished beverage into clay bottles, and where the sake takes on its unique twist. You see, each and every bottle of Three Kami sake is bottled with three perfect cherries grown in the Hanami Mura orchards, and sugar cured for added sweetness. Each cherry represents one of the kami or fortunes for which the beverage is named. One for Inari, the fortune of rice whose favor creates the magnificent rice that is the first of the essential ingredients, one for the kami of water that is the second, and one for Ebisu whose blessing of honest work makes it possible for the first two to combine into the sake we drink. During the short winter harvest time, the cherries are placed in the bottles freshly picked from the frozen orchards, but the rest of the year, the monks use cherries preserved in sake. This gives the rare Three Kami Winter Sake a unique taste compared to the sake produced all year long, and makes it the most sought after of all. The cherries impart a delicate flavor to the drink, noticeable only by the connoisseurs, but their ruby skins give it a slight tint of pink, so that even the least knowledgeable can pick out a cup of Three Kami from a lineup of even the finest of brands.

As you move further into the brewery you see the filtration room where the pressed sake is run through progressively smaller screens before running the liquid through charcoal in a process called roka. Here the remaining starches from the rice grains are removed leaving a crisp, clean, and clear liquid. Any impurities that may have been passed on during the brewing process are filtered out, and only the best attributes of the rice, water, and koji are left behind. In the next room is where the fermented rice and water is pressed, creating the raw sake called moromi that will be filtered into the final product in the previous room. The fermented product is poured in from the tanks above, into canvas bags that are tied and placed into a wooden press called a fune. Off to the side is another set of stairs leading to the top floor of the building.

The top floor is where the whole process starts and where the brewmaster lives. You will at first notice a musty smell here as a result of cultivating the koji mold that makes the whole sake process possible. Here is where the rice is milled, removing the harder ends and leaving only the starchy interior of the grain. The rice is then meticulously washed before it is soaked until the perfect amount of water is absorbed. When the rice has been soaked, it is steamed. The rice is never boiled it only receives a gentle steaming before being combined with the koji rice and water, then left to ferment for 32 days.

There are of course, many other places hidden in remote corners of this facility, including staff quarters, the brewmaster's home, and the Hanami Mura cherry storage area. Most of these places are either private, or kept secret for a reason. Unfortunately they are not available on a cursory tour,

An excerpt from "A Cup of Contentment", by Ikoma Uodosuke

"It is said that in Rokugan it is the quality and skill of the artisan that truly defines the art being admired. With the standard arts this is nothing but true. However, with sake it could not be more wrong. Sake's greatness comes not from the brewmaster's knowledge and skill, but more from the purity and perfection of its parts. Three Kami Sake is a unique beverage within the confines of the Empire. It is unique for many reasons, but chief among them is it's location at Hanami Mura. The small town is surrounded by natural rarities that make it the perfect place to brew tremendous sake. The purest rain filters through the majestic forest into the waterways, some of the land's most talented farmers pay taxes in the form of fine rice, and the town's renowned winter cherry harvest all contribute to the excellence of the beverage created there. One sip and you will forever be entranced by the intoxicating flavor."

but if you do find yourself in need of these rooms, wish to speak to the brewmaster or any of his honored guests, just ask passing monks and they will lead you in the right direction.

Characters

Most of the brewery's inhabitants and/or workers are in fact acolytes or younger monks from one of the monasteries in the city. A portion of their training leads them here to the brewery where they can work the will of Ebisu and earn his favor before continuing their training. Most of these monks are remarkably forgettable, but some of the inhabitants of the brewery are actually quite memorable.

JOUSEI, THE BREWMASTER

School/Rank: Monk 1

Earth: 2	Water: 2	Fire: 2	Air: 2	Void: 2
	Strength: 3	Intelligence: 4		
Honor: 2.0	Glory: 3.0	Status: 0		



Skills: Craft: Cooking 1, Craft: Farming 1, Craft: Sake Brewing 7, Lore: Sake 3, Theology (Fortunism) 3
Advantage: Leadership
Disadvantage: Gullible

Jousei the brewmaster is a large man, with the traditional bald pate of a monk. He is obviously used to his position of respect and the fine food that comes with it. His frame bulges with the many meals he has enjoyed over the years, but his joyful personality

cannot be dampened by the same flesh that covers the rest of him. The flush of his face and the red that tints his nose is a quick reminder that he is also quite fond of sake and certainly tastes a great quantity of that which he produces. He is always happy to see a guest, and even happier to give a tour of his beloved sake works. His only flaw, if he has one, is that he is far too trusting of those around him, and doesn't see his favorite student Akindo as the threat that he truly is.

AKINDO, THE SECOND IN COMMAND

School/Rank: Monk 1

Earth: 2	Water: 2	Fire: 2	Air: 2	Void: 2
Intelligence: 3 Awareness: 3				
Honor: 1.0	Glory: 0.5	Status: 0		

Skills: Commerce 5, Craft: Sake Brewing 3, Deceit (Lying) 3, Lore: Sake 1, Theology 1, Underworld 1
Disadvantage: Small

Akindo is a small and wiry man with the same shaved head as his mentor. What he lacks in size, he has more than made up for in ambition. As a baby he was left at the monastery of Hanami Mura and was raised there. Since his first days he has waited for an opportunity to make something more of himself, to prove to all these other peasants and monks that he is meant for glory and riches. All of his talents and skills lie in commerce, he has a keen mind for trade and for all things involving koku. He waits now for the day that he can step in and turn Three Kami sake into the cash cow that he knows it can be. Unfortunately for Jousei, Akindo has recently made a friend in Ikoma Yodosuke the renowned sake admirer. With Yodosuke's name and fondness for the sake combined with Akindo's eye for koku, Jousei's influence is at risk and none know how long it will last.



IKOMA YODOSUKE

School/Rank: Lion Warden 1/Akodo Bushi 2/Doji Courtier 1

Earth: 3	Water: 3	Fire: 4	Air: 4	Void: 3
Perception: 4				
Honor: 3.5	Glory: 5	Status: 3		

Skills: Athletics 2, Calligraphy 3, Courtier 3, Craft: Sake Brewing 1, Defense 3, Etiquette 5, Horsemanship 3, Kenjutsu (Katana) 3, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: Law 2, Lore: Sake 3, Spears (Yari) 5, Storytelling (Bragging, Oratory) 5

Advantages: Wealthy, Servant (Personal Attendant) (twice), Different School(Doji Courtier)

Disadvantages: Bad Reputation (Drunk), Compulsion (2 points, Sake), Spoiled (Sake)

Ikoma Yodosuke is not our average Lion samurai by any stretch of the imagination. He was trained as a bushi because he begged his father to make it happen, something that happened often in his childhood. It didn't take long for his bushi training to bore him, and for a new fascination to take over. He became fully engrossed in sake and began pursuing it all across the empire. From Friendly Traveler to Cherry Blossom Snow to Three Kami, he tasted them all and savored them for their unique flavors and personalities. Something about the Three Kami vintage took him on a whole new trip of fascination. Using his father's connections at court as well as their clan's newfound alliance, he began training as a Doji Courtier and began to use their system of favors to bargain his way into more of his favorite sake. He is slowly using his new training to place himself into a more prominent position in the empire as a sort of Fortune of Sake. With his recent book being celebrated as the greatest treatise on sake, he is certainly on his way to that title.

Akodo Harubi

❖ The Gambling House ❖

Using the L5R CCG cards in the RPG

I have played L5R since 1996. At first I was introduced to the roleplaying game and eventually started playing the collectable card game. I followed both fairly closely for a few years before parting ways with the card game. Nothing against the card version, I just realized that my wallet only stretched so far and that my heart truly lay with the dice rather than with the cards. I guess you could say I am a tried and true dice chucker and cardflopping just didn't satisfy me the same way. Now, this didn't mean that I stopped with the cards altogether, quite the opposite actually. I've always kept around a fairly large collection of cards to use in my roleplaying. I could use the cards to flesh out nearly anything.

As a player

Back then I was purely a player (not yet a Gamemaster), and my options with the cards were somewhat limited but that didn't stop me from getting creative. For example, if you are like me and not able to draw a decent portrait for your character, there is a load of fantastic card art out there for you to choose from. If you're rolling up a crazy and bloodthirsty Matsu bushi there are cards like Matsu Robun, Matsu Gohei, Matsu Yoshino, and even Matsu Seijuro.

Of course, this is the most obvious use of the cards, but there are more. Consider using them to come up with a background for your character.

There are a few ways to create a character using game cards. If you are a regular card gamer, most likely you have quite a collection that is completely sorted. This makes things a bit more difficult, but not impossible. I suggest taking a random sampling of all card types from both Fate and Dynasty cards. If not, just buy a booster pack of the most recent expansion. Deal the cards face up in front of you and begin looking the cards over. If you haven't already created your character, you can use the cards at this point to begin building your character. Personality cards can be your char-

acter or persons in his background. Holdings, retainers, and items, can explain places your character has been, people that have worked for him, or special gifts that he has been given. Events, actions, and even spells, can tell you what happened in your character's past. What kinds of martial or political battles she has been in, or even spells she has cast or have had cast upon her, or for shugenja character, possible starting spells or spells your character might be interested in acquiring in the future. You can start with the basic bones of a character on your sheet and flesh it out with your cards, or you can use the cards to come up with the concept and stack the sheet to match.

As a Gamemaster

Gamemasters can take major advantage of cards in their game to add loads of flavor to the setting. NPCs come to life when you can base them on characters on the cards, or when you can present card art as portraits for various characters that flit in and out of a particular scene. It makes for a more vivid experience and makes your characters even more memorable. The best use of cards for a Gamemaster, I think, is for session prep. We are all incredibly busy, and we can always find ourselves mired in the swamps of real life. Let's say you are running a game on Saturday. It's Friday afternoon and you are at work. You know you have to plot your session, but between date night

and family time, you have about an hour to get a session together. If you have cards available, you have a game session ready and waiting. For example, just a few weeks ago, I was hard pressed to put together a session before game night. I made the decision to buy two Samurai Edition boosters and made my session from those.

There were several cards in the packs that didn't really fit my campaign, so I took those out. I was left with about 22 or 23 cards to choose from. After a few minutes of thought, I chose 5 cards: Tsuruchi Mitsuzuka, Bayushi



Saya, Venerable Master, Iuchi Umeka, and Righteous Fury. The Venerable Master card became one of their acquaintances in the city, an established NPC, who warned the group that some of the businesses in the city were rumored to be involved in illegal activities. Iuchi Umeka became a contact that led the party to a gambling house suspected of dealing in gaijin goods. The Tsuruchi was the NPC dealing the goods to the gambling house owner on behalf of the Mantis. The action card gave me an excuse for combat, and the Bayushi gave me a lead in to the next adventure. Within about 30 minutes, I had five bullet points for my session, and easily converted that into an adventure. We got about 4 hours of enjoyable play time out of those five cards, and I still have several options in those packs for future games.

And this is only one possibility, as there could be potentially many more uses for cards in the RPG. In combat, they could be used as stand-ins for miniatures, they could

be paired/grouped to represent engaged combatants, put in order of initiative, or simply as a visual aid for each combatants' general state (face up for healthy, bowed for badly injured, face down for incapacitated/dead), etc.

As you can see, Legend of the Five Rings Collectible Card Game, and Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game, have a unique and almost symbiotic relationship. No matter whether you are a dice chucker, a card flopper, or even an equal opportunity gamer, that does not mean that one game cannot be used to affect the other. Go ahead and pick up some cards if you do not have any, and give them a try. You might find that they help in your game. Although we are approaching the end of the Race for the Throne mega game, you can visit www.l5r.com to find ways that your game can affect the storyline, as a player of the RPG.

Akodo Harubi & Kalajel

The Hare Clan in the L5R Card Game

It all started with a collectible card game. The world of Legend of the Five Rings was born as a CCG, soon completed by a Roleplaying Game and a Miniature Game. I was already a multi-classed RPG/CCG player (Rolemaster, Runequest, Middle Earth, Shadowrun and many others, with games of Magic the Gathering in-between) when the L5R CCG arrived on the shelves. I honestly don't remember which game, between the L5R CCG and RPG, I played first. Jade Edition was fresh from the printers, and when I wasn't playing with my Unicorn deck (and losing, a lot...), I was playing my Unicorn character (a Moto Gal'hahad, if I remember correctly, at a time when the Shinjo were in charge of the clan and the Moto considered as honorless barbarians).

This long walk down memory lane to state a simple fact: many fans of Rokugan play or have played both the CCG and the RPG (and sometimes, Clan Wars as well). Although Musha Shugyo is primarily dedicated to the RPG, it seemed only natural to have a small section about the CCG.

In this issue that is focused on the minor clans, I decided to have a look at the Hare Clan in the card game. The choice wasn't difficult; it is the only minor clan which has a legal Stronghold in the current Samurai Edition environment... In homage to the Hare Clan, I created a new Personality frame sporting their colors: red and white, and proceeded to update all Hare Clan personalities ever printed to the Samurai Edition template. While I was doing this, I decided to add more cards to the Hare player's arsenal, creating seven homebrew cards, three of which are nods to characters and places introduced in

the Hanami Mura section of this issue of Musha Shugyo. The eighteen cards on the following pages are the result of this work. I hope you will like them.

Though I kept in touch with the card game's new developments, in particular the storyline's evolution, I haven't played it since the end of the Gold arc. So I asked for help on the AEG boards and Togashi Mouchliazo and Sensei Ashinaga replied with card suggestions and ideas. Then, I refined the concepts and wordings with the help of playtester Chris "Shahai Kirisu" Braun and rules team member Brook "MacBeth2001" Cunningham. If you like the new cards, they are the persons you should be grateful to. If you don't like the new cards though, I assume the entire responsibility. If they are successful I will probably create one or two more cards per future issue of the zine.

How to use the cards

To use the cards, you simply need to print them (three copies of each), cut them, and glue them on some extra commons you have laying around. Obviously, shuffling will be an issue if you do not use plastic sleeves, so I highly recommend using those.

Once you're done with this, it's time to build your Hare deck. But for this, I leave the room to a more qualified person, Chris Braun.

Otaku Mike

Putting The "New" Hare Cards To Use

I've always been a fan of the underdog in L5R. In fact, it was what led me to the Shadowlands after beginning as a Unicorn player. During Hidden Emperor, when Unicorn was dominating in a way that wouldn't be seen again until Khol Wall, I wasn't enjoying playing them so I turned to Shadowlands, the only faction at the time that didn't have any boxable personalities. Since then, I've played pre-Warren of the One Tribe Ratling and now Spider, both of which were often lower tier at best. And despite losing often, I've loved it. Now we have the Hare Clan. I was the first player in our group to build a Hare deck ("I'm Bouncier than You!" v.1.0) and was proud to have it go 3 and 7. The first win over one of our best player's Unicorn deck was cheered around the table. The joy of winning with the underdog is always that much sweeter.

This fan expansion for Hare has been an interesting exercise in trying to help convert the RPG characters that Mike Brodu had for these Hare personalities into cards that you'd like to play. The diversity of themes in the characters made it difficult to be cohesive, but we did our best. I hope you like them.

I wanted to offer a couple of sample Samurai-legal decks (other than the fan cards) that you can try for some casual games. These aren't fine-tuned, but are a foundation to build from.

The premise of the first deck is lots of movement, backed up by solid battle actions and Scouts, a trait I've always liked. While this deck uses lots of the commonly played

battle actions, you could also go in a slightly different direction and enhance the force boosting theme that Scouts can make use of, and Usagi Heigi has, by adding in Saga of Taki or Shameful Tactics. However, in keeping with the Hares fight with evil, I purposely didn't include Hired Killer or any Kolat, Shadowlands, or Dark Virtue cards.

The second deck is a little more adventurous and takes advantage of the cheapness of the Hare people to try and pop an early Last One and start swinging for the fences. The lack of Shugenja is a tough thing to deal with when looking for the combo, but including Togashi Miyako makes it slightly more viable, giving you access to Song of the World to help look for The Last One ASAP. If you get the combo off, you'll have one tough little rabbit!

"I'm Bouncier than You"

Lots of Scouts means lots of Recon actions, which makes Ideal Conditions tough to deal with if it pops. Dig for it as fast as you can. I included Rout and Daidoji Gunso to try to have some way to remove attachments, which Hare is lacking.

"The Last Hare"

Dig for The Last One and cheap people as fast as you can. If you can get Iron Tetsubo on the Last Hare, you can be tough to stop. For every time you can actually pull it off though, you'll have another game where it's a tough slog because you don't see The Last One. But this is fun when it works!

Shahai Kirisu

"I'm Bouncier than You"

Stronghold: Shiro Usagi

Dynasty: (40)

Personalities: (24)

Usagi Ozaki
Usagi Kashira Exp
Ujina Kadano
Usagi Ginsei
Usagi Hotsuken
Usagi Ozaki Inexp x3
Usagi Kashira x3
Usagi Genchi x2
Usagi Heiji x3
Ujina Saionji x2
Ujina Masaru x3
Ujina Ukita x3

Holdings: (14)

Seat of Power
Private Trader
Hanami Mura Temple x3
Secluded Waystation x3
Famous Bazaar x3
Fortified Camp x3

Events/Regions: (2)

A New Wall
Ideal Conditions

Fate: (40)

Actions: (30)

Crude Trap x3
Shuten Doji's Fury x2
Versatile Army x3
Rapid Deployment x3
Stay Your Blade x3
Draw Your Blade x3
Few against Many x3
Peasant Vengeance x3
Rout x2
Furious Assault x3
Crippling Cut x2

Rings: (1)

Water

Followers: (9)

Daidoji Gunso x3
Ronin Scout x3
Wandering Budoka x2

Item: (1)

Kenno

"The Last Hare"

Stronghold: Shiro Usagi

Dynasty: (40)

Personalities: (20)

Usagi Ozaki
Usagi Kashira Exp
Ujina Kadano
Usagi Ginsei
Usagi Hotsuken
Usagi Kashira x3
Usagi Ozaki Inexp. X3
Usagi Genchi x3
Ujina Saionji x3
Togashi Miyako x3

Holdings: (16)

Seat of Power
Supply Smugglers
Hanami Mura Temple x3
Family Library
Famous Bazaar x3
Secluded Waystation x3
Shrine to Fukurojin
Venerable Master x3

Events: (4)

Call of Thunder
Commanding Favour
A New Wall
In Time of War

Fate: (40)

Actions: (32)

A Legion of One x3
Crippling Cut x3
Desperate Wager x2
Doomed Intentions x3
Draw Your Blade x3
Encircled Terrain x3
Hired Killer x2
Justly Earned Victory x3
Song of the World x3
Stay Your Blade x3
The Last One x3
The Tale of Tsukuro
Turn the Tide x2

Rings: (2)

Air
Water

Items: (4)

Kenno
Iron Tetsubo x3

武者修行

The Gambling House

THE HARE CARDS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE FULL COLOR VERSION OF MUSHA SHUGYO #2

THE HARE CARDS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE FULL COLOR VERSION OF MUSHA SHUGYO #2

❖ *Post-Scriptum* ❖

So, What's Next?

Phew! As I'm typing this, I am minutes away from finishing the layout and creating the PDF that you are reading. And I'm thinking that I should have some clever words to introduce the next issue of *Musha Shugyo*, but honestly, I just want this one to be done and out there :-)

So I'm going to keep this short and to the point...

Next issue's theme is going to be the Non-Humans. Of the non-Tainty variety, as those will have their own issue in an upcoming Spider/Shadowlands *Musha Shugyo*. We should have some scaly Naga, furry Nezumi, slimy Ningyo, feathery Kenku, shifty Spirits, and more!

Don't forget to check www.musha-shugyo.com regularly for updates on the next issue, and the upcoming readers survey!

See you in a few months!

Mike Brodu

Musha Shugyo #2 Homebrew Contest

After a contest that saw the crunch-masters shine, It's time to let the fluff-meisters show their skills. The theme of this contest is, unsurprisingly, the non-human races of Rokugan.

The rules: design a non-human NPC of the race of your choice. It must be complete with both its back-story and its stat block. And a final little twist, you must provide an adventure idea (in the form of the classic Challenge-Focus-Strike) that uses this NPC in a way of your choosing (it can be an ally or an opponent, etc.).

Deadline for this contest is October 31st.

We're looking forward to reading your creations!

Musha Shugyo